BENKEI IN NEW YORK

PERFECT COLLECTION

BENKEI IN NEW YORK

STORY BY JINPACHI MORI ART BY JIRO TANIGUCHI

PULP GRAPHIC NOVEL

PERFECT COLLECTION

STORY BY
JINPACHI MORI
ART BY
JIRO TANIGUCHI

The volume contains GENKEI IN NEW YORK installments from PULP Vol. 4 No. 7 through Vol. 5, No. 1 in their entirety

ENGLISH ADAPTATION
BY YUJI ONIKI

Touch-Up Art & Lettering/Steve Dutro
Cover Design/Izumi Evers
Editor/Alvin Lu

Director of Sales & Marketing/Dallas Middaugh
Managing Editor/Annette Roman
Editor-in-Chief/Hyoe Narita
Publisher/Seiji Horibuchi

© 1996 Jinpachi Mori/Jiro Taniguchi/Shogakukan First published by Shogakukan Inc. in Japan as "NY no Genkei" GENKEI IN NEW YORK is a trademark of Viz Communications Inc. All rights reserved. No unauthorized reproduction allowed. The stories, characters, institutions, and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional. For the purposes of publication in English, the artwork in this publication is generally printed in reverse from the original Japanese version

Printed in Canada

Published by Viz Communications, Inc
P.O. Box 77010 San Francisco CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, May 2001

Visit **www.viz.com** and **www.pulp-mag.com**

PULP GRAPHIC NOVELS TO DATE

BAKUNE YUUNG VOL. 1

BANANA FISH VOL. 1
BANANA FISH VOL. 2
BANANA FISH VOL. 3
BANANA FISH VOL. 4

BLACK & WHITE VOL. 1
BLACK & WHITE VOL. 2
BLACK & WHITE VOL. 3

DANCE TILL TOMORROW VOL. 1
DANCE TILL TOMORROW VOL. 2
DANCE TILL TOMORROW VOL. 3
DANCE TILL TOMORROW VOL. 4

HEARTBROKEN ANGELS VOL. 1
HEARTBROKEN ANGELS VOL. 2 (May 2001)

STRAIN VOL. 1
STRAIN VOL. 2
STRAIN VOL. 3
STRAIN VOL. 4

VOYEUR
VOYEURS INC VOL. 1
VOYEURS INC VOL. 2

CONTENTS

Chapter 1
Haggis 7

Chapter 2
Hooh 37

Chapter 3
Throw Back 67

Chapter 4
The Cry 95

Chapter 5
Sword Fish 125

Chapter 6
Necklace 165

Chapter 7
A Basement 195

Chapter 1: HAGGIS

KRAKK!

FSH
ゆみ
BRIDA

TIK
TIK
.....
FOO
FLUSH

PRETTY UNPLEASANT, EH?
WELL...
I SHOULDN'T COMPLAIN.
...?
.....
I ASKED FOR THIS RAIN AND THUNDER.
HA HA.
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE STILL INDIANS IN MANHATTAN.
HMM. YOU'RE PRETTY HUMOROUS FOR ONE.
NOT REALLY.
I'M JAPANESE.
YOU DON'T LIKE THE RAIN?
BUT IT'LL STOP SOON

I LIKE RAIN.
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT THUNDERS.
.....
FWIK
FWIK
IT MAKES THIS TASTE BETTER.
FWIK
CARE TO JOIN ME?
HMM.
I THOUGHT IT'D BE A CHEAP BLEND, BUT THIS IS MALT SCOTCH.
WOW
SPEY-SIDE.
CRAGGANMORE
THAT'S RIGHT.

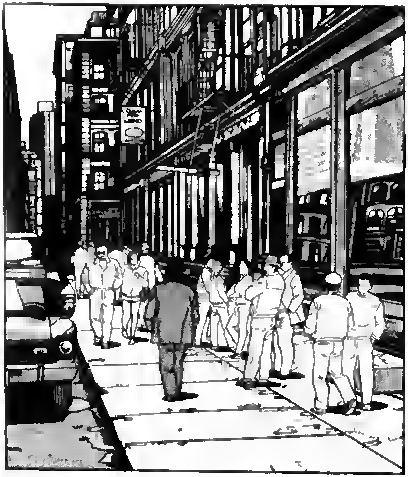
DAMN!
CHUP
CRAPPY RENTAL CAR!

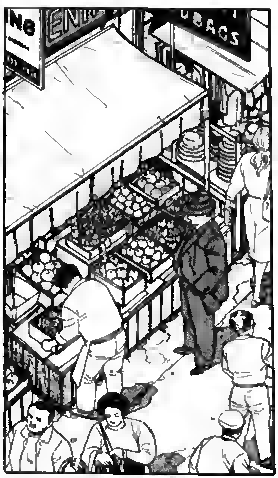
HM?
FOO
FWIP FWIP
FWIP FWIP
CHAK!
SCRICH!

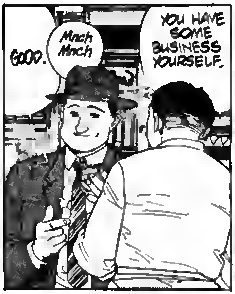
PIER
IT STOPPED RAINING
NERS
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
BEN-KEI?
BENKEI.
UH-HUH.
I RUN A BASEMENT BAR NO ONE GOES TO IN THE VILLAGE
YOU SERVE THIS KIND OF WHISKEY THERE?
WE HAVE ANYTHING YOU'D WANT.
THAT'S GREAT.
YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
WELL, I KNOW MY CUSTOMERS.
.....
I SHARED A DRINK WITH YOU.
I FIGURE YOU'LL BRING ME BUSINESS.
YOU'RE A SMART BUSINESS-MAN.

GIVE ME A CALL WHEN YOU'RE IN THE VILLAGE.
I'LL MEET YOU.
BEEP!
PHONE
WHY?
I DON'T HAVE A SON.
KLAK

TASTE CAN NEVER ESCAPE THE HELL OF MEMORY






GOOD.
Much Much
YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS YOURSELF.

HOW'S BUSINESS ?
GOOD.
ONLY FIVE STOLEN APPLES.
chop

THAT ITALIAN'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
FWIK

BENIKEI, WE ALREADY HAVE BUYERS...
THE ORGANIZATION STEALS A VAN GOGH OR A PICASSO
WE MAKE FORGERIES AND SELL THEM TO MODERATELY WEALTHY COLLECTORS.
IF WE COVER OUR TRACKS IT'S A GOOD BUSINESS.
BUT...
TIMING IS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE.
...

ONCE WE AGREE ON A DEAL.
..IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DELIVER THE PRODUCT TO OUR CLIENTS WHILE THEY'RE STILL DROOLING.
YOU SOUND LIKE YOU RUN A PIZZA JOINT.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
SELLING PIZZAS IS HOW I LEARNED EVERYTHING ABOUT NEW YORK
I'LL MEET THE DEAD-LINE.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE IN THAT DANGEROUS LINE OF BUSINESS.
THIS IS GOOD WORK.
I'M A MULTI-BUSINESS-MAN
AEEE!
A TOKEN OF OUR FRIEND-SHIP?
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO HURT YOUR HANDS
THEN AT LEAST CARRY THIS.

SO YOU DECIDED TO COME.
I COULDN'T FORGET THE TASTE OF THAT WHISKEY.
THERE AREN'T THAT MANY OCCASIONS WHEN ONE REALLY NEEDS A DRINK.
YOU'RE A PHILOSOPHER
I BECAME ONE WHEN I STARE TOO MUCH AT SOMEONE DRINKING.
.....
LET'S GO.

I'VE NEVER BEEN TO SUCH A STRANGE BAR.
THERE'S NO JUKE-BOX.
AND NO CHATTING.
BUT WE HAVE THE DRINKS YOU NEED.
LONG TIME SINCE I HAD A DRINK LIKE THIS.
LAST TIME WAS IN SCOTLAND.
THAT SO?
IN 1968.
I WAS TWENTY YEARS OLD.
GOOD TRIP?
YOU KIDDING?
THE VIETNAM WAR WAS AT ITS PEAK.
I WENT TO DODGE THE DRAFT.
UNDER MY FATHER'S ORDERS.
.....
GULK
THAT'S WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE
YOU SHOULDN'T BE ASHAMED OF IT.
WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW? YOU'RE JAPANESE.

THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN AMERICA ALSO HAPPEN IN JAPAN.
PEOPLE IN NEW YORK ARE TOO CONSCIOUS OF RACE.
I'M A SECOND-RATE NEIL SIMON.
HA HA HA
HUH
YOU'RE RIGHT.
WERE YOU A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR?
YOU KIDDING?
I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO DIE.
THAT'S STRAIGHTFORWARD.
BUT...
YOU COULDN'T HAVE DODGED THE DRAFT JUST BY TAKING A TRIP.
THAT'S RIGHT. I DIDN'T WANT TO D.E., BUT MY FATHER DIDN'T WANT TO BE DISGRACED BY A SON WHO DIDN'T GO.
PANK
.....
AS YOU SAID, IT'S WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE.
HM.
TUG

'WE HAVE SOME BAD NEWS. YOUR DRAFT NOTICE HAS FINALLY ARRIVED. NEEDLESS TO SAY, YOUR MOTHER AND I HAVE BEEN DISTRESSED TO PUT IT MILDLY.
'I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MY SUCCESSOR. I WAS PLANNING ON HAVING YOU INHERIT MY BUSINESS TEN YEARS DOWN THE LINE.
'I HAVE A SOLUTION, THOUGH...
GET INJURED, BIL!'
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MY CAR BROKE DOWN AND I NEED TO MAKE A PHONE CALL.
CAN YOU TAKE ME INTO TOWN?

'TAKE A TRIP TO SCOTLAND AND GET INTO AN ACCIDENT. THAT'LL SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS!
"GET INJURED, BILL."
GLUG
GLUG
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HAGGIS?
...?
YOU HAVE HAGGIS?
I MADE IT.

TAK
WOW.
I'M IMPRESSED. YOU MUST BE A GOURMET CHEF.
IT'S SIMPLE.
YOU JUST STUFF SOME LIVER AND HEART INTO INTESTINES.
THIS IS THE ONLY DECENT THING TO EAT IN SCOTLAND.
SHACH SHACH
MACH MACH
MMM.
TASTES GOOD.
I USED GOOD INGREDIENTS.
IT BRINGS BACK A LOT OF MEMORIES.
THAT'S WHY I MADE IT.
WHAT?

CHK
TAK
TAK
I'LL HAVE THE SAME AS THIS GENTLE-MAN
SURE
.....
.....
TO OUR MEMORIES.

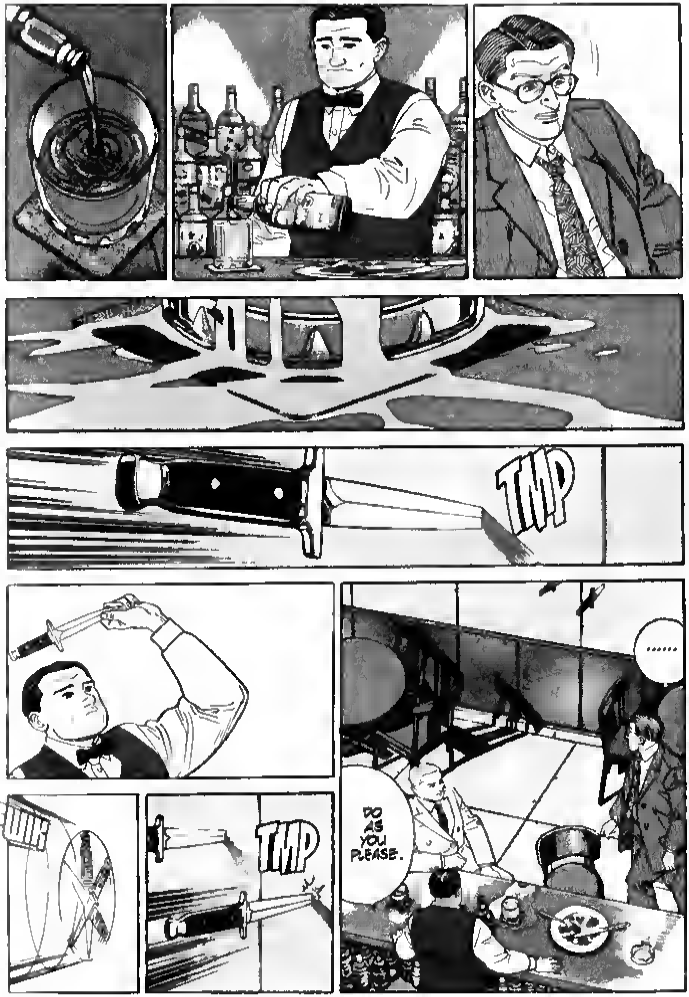
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
YOU MUST NOT HAVE FELT GOOD ABOUT...
AVOIDING WAR AND STILL KILLING SOMEONE.
.....
NO!
THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
ARE YOU AMERICAN?
YES I'M FROM THE EAST COAST.

AMERICANS ARE LUCKY.
YOU BECAME INDEPENDENT FROM ENGLAND.
HMM. I SEE..
THE CULLODEN WAR STILL WEIGHS HEAVILY ON THE SCOTS, HUH?
THE MEN WHO FOUGHT IN THAT WAR WERE COURAGEOUS WARRIORS.
WHAT'S SO NOBLE ABOUT DYING?
WHISKEY DOESN'T SUIT A COWARD LIKE YOU.
IT'S SILLY TO DIE FOR A COUNTRY...
IT'S A BARBAROUS IDEA.

"BILL!"
VAAAROOOM!!
"GET INJURED!"
VAAAROOOM!!
VAAAROOOM!!
"BILL!"
"GET INJURED!"

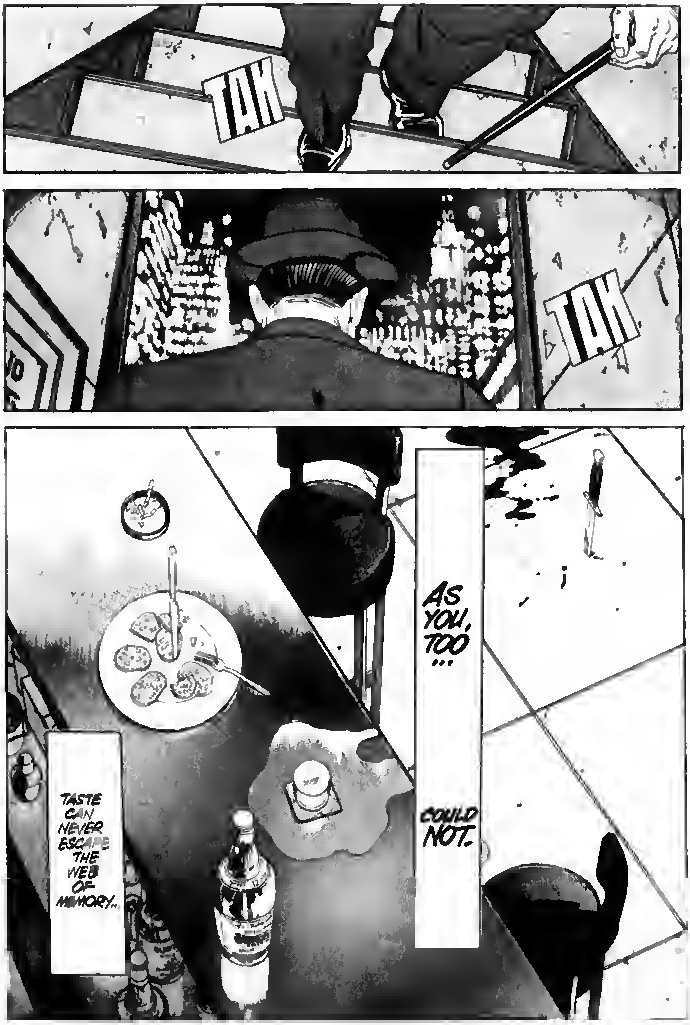
VRROOOM!!
SCREE
KRIK
SWIRGE

THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
THAT WOMAN LOST CONTROL OF THE WHEEL IN THE RAIN.
THANKS TO HER, I BROKE MY LEG.
THAT'S RIGHT THERE WAS SOME RISK.
WITH HEAD-ON COLLISIONS, THE CHANCES OF A REAR-SEAT PASSENGER DYING ARE LOW.
.....
LOOK AT THE GENTLEMAN NEXT TO YOU.
.....
I WAS SITTING IN THE FRONT PASSENGER'S SEAT.
!
TH-THAT CAN'T BE.
EVEN IF IT WERE TRUE, YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER. YOU WERE A BABY. WHO'D BELIEVE YOU?
CLANG
WELL, THE WHISKEY'LL TELL THE TRUTH.


TMP
TMP
FWIP
DO AS YOU PLEASE.
.....

TUG
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHO ARE YOU!?
A DEALER IN REVENGE.
IN JAPAN, WE CALL THIS "ADAUCHI," A VENDETTA.
TUG
DAMN IT!
FAK
huf
huf
THE GAME IS FAIR NOW.
THE HAGGIS YOU ATE WAS MADE OF

YOUR DAUGHTER'S HEART AND LIVER.
UR...
N-
NO!
URR
ARR
URRR
GLIG
huf
huf
huf


TAK
TAK
AS YOU, TOO ...
COULD NOT.
TASTE CAN NEVER ESCAPE THE WEB OF MEMORY...

"*Benkei in New York* is a short, sharp shock of manga noir." —Greg Rucka, author of *Batman* and *Whiteout*

"Diabolically well-told, occasionally harrowing, *Benkei* is better than 96% of the crime fiction coming out of America right now."

—Warren Ellis, author of *Planetary* and *Ministry of Space*

Manga doesn't get much more *noir* than this. Benkei is just another expatriate Japanese artist living in the Big Apple. Or so it appears. As these "diabolical hard-boiled stories" show, surfaces aren't always what they seem. Flashbacks delve into sordid, secret past lives, and old scores, long festering, emerge without warning, asking to be settled. And Benkei's secret? Maybe it's just that he's the only artist in town who isn't having fantasies of being a hitman-for-hire. He is one. Each self-contained episode in this complete *Benkei* collection is a tightly plotted, beautifully rendered, psychologically harrowing ride into the heart of urban darkness. Hard-boiled tales of revenge, rendered in the tight-lipped, fine-line style of Jiro Taniguchi, one of the creators of Viz's *Hotel Harbour View.*

PULP GRAPHIC NOVEL $16.95 USA/$26.00 CAN PUBLISHED BY VIZ
www.viz.com

51695

9 781569 316290

ISBN 1-56931-629-5

7 82009 08043 5

BENKEI IN NEW YORK

STORY BY JINPACHI MORI ART BY JIRO TANIGUCHI

PULP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Chapter 2: HOOK

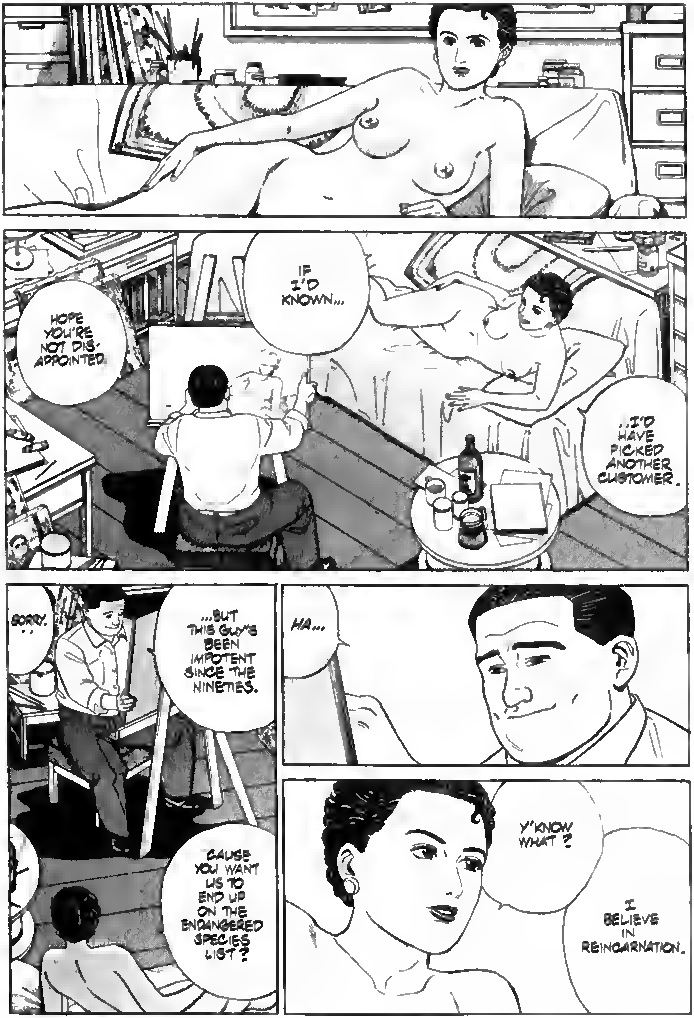
FOO
H
WOW!

SHH

WHERE YOU GOING?
TOK
TOK
SHOPPING.
AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?
GRABBING A SALAD AT THE KOREAN'S?
AT THE MARKET.
MARKET?

YOU RUN A RESTAURANT ?
KING

HOOK?
YES.
TEN DOLLARS.
THOK


IF I'D KNOWN...
...I'D HAVE PICKED ANOTHER CUSTOMER.
HOPE YOU'RE NOT DIS-APPOINTED.
HA...
Y'KNOW WHAT?
I BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION.
...BUT THIS GUY'S BEEN IMPOTENT SINCE THE NINETIES.
SORRY...
CAUSE YOU WANT US TO END UP ON THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST?

THAT'S RIGHT. WE'LL ALL BE REBORN AS THE AIDS VIRUS.
TCH!
UHGH.

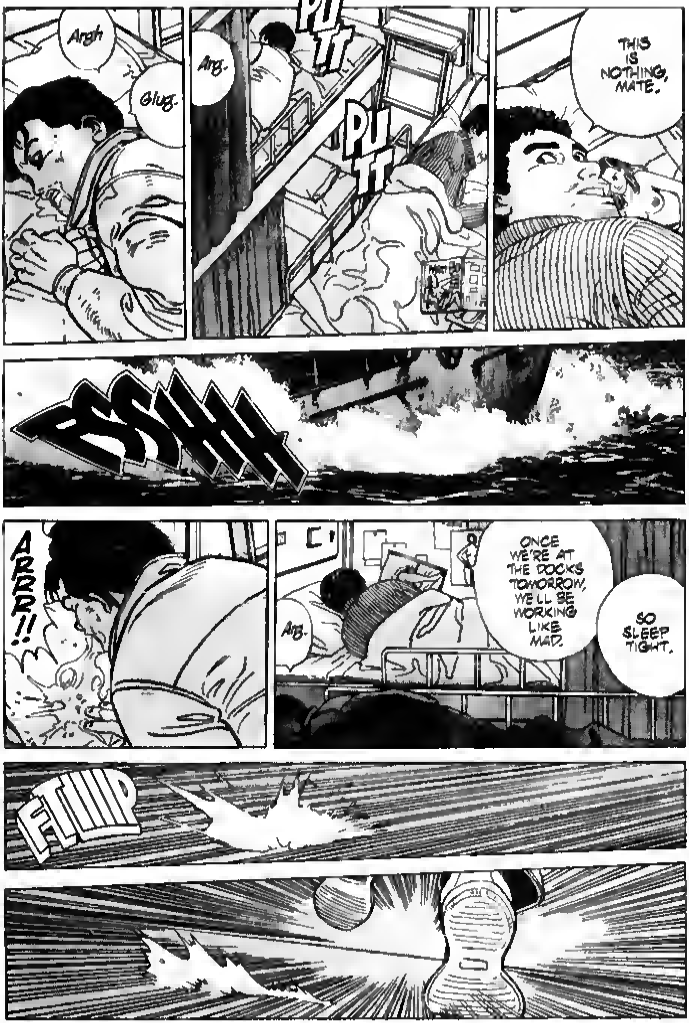
FWISH
HA.
YOU LIAR.
TAP
TAP
HE LIKES TO USE THE FIRE ESCAPE.
GOT A GUEST.
THIS IS THE FOURTH FLOOR!

MMM MMM
SO WHERE'S YOUR HOME?
I DUNNO.
I CAN'T REMEMBER.
MMM MMM
FOO FOO
YOU EAT A LOT FOR A SHRIMP.
CANAL STREET'S WHERE IT'S AT.
THE JAPANESE TOURISTS ORDER WAY TOO MUCH FOOD, SO THE GARBAGE BINS THERE ARE A TREASURE TROVE.
TWO DAYS AGO I ATE A SHITLOAD OF CRABS AT A CHINESE RESTAURANT.

WHY'D YOU DRAW ME?
NOTHING BETTER TO DO.
...
YOU COOK FOR THAT KID FOR THE SAME REASON, I BET.
JUST KILLING TIME.
YOU THINK YOU'RE MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE OR SOMETHING?
YOU MIGHT BE STANDING TALL NOW BUT ONE DAY YOU'LL BE THE ONE OUT ON THE STREETS.
THAT MIGHT BE NICE.

YOU BASTARD!
GO DROWN IN YOUR SORROWS, YOU SELF-INDULGENT PRICK.
YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL BODY.
HA!
FSH
SAVE IT!
COME BY AGAIN.
CHAK
HELL NO!
CLICK

MR. YOSHIDA ?
IF I'M CORRECT, YOU WERE ON THE FISHING TRAWLER FUKUIN FIFTEEN YEARS AGO...
....
WWWOOOH


Argh
Glug.
Arg.
PU TT
PU TT
THIS IS NOTHING, MATE.
SSHH
ARRR!!
Arg.
ONCE WE'RE AT THE DOCKS TOMORROW, WE'LL BE WORKING LIKE MAD.
SO SLEEP TIGHT.
FTHIP

Huf
Huf
Huf

Huf
Huf
Huf
Haah
TOP FISH
Huh
Huh
LONK
AIEEE!
TOP FISH
REMEMBER NOW?
FSHAA

FHOOSH
I'M GOIN' HOME
WHAT?
HOW YOU GONNA DO THAT?
GOTTA GO.
EVERYONE MAKES FUN OF ME.
CALM DOWN.
HEY SNAP OUT OF IT!
ESPECIALLY YOU!
BRR BRR

H-HOLD ON...
WE'LL GO WAKE UP THE CAPTAIN AND TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT.
NO!
FSH
A
A
AROH!
EWOOO

TOP FISH SATO
HOW DID YOU?
YOU WERE SENDING HIS MOTHER...
...MONEY FROM AMERICA.
B-BUT ...
...HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ME?
TAKE A LOOK.
I SETTLE VENDETTAS
URRR...

I WAS SORRY! I TRIED TO ATONE!
I WAS TOLD TO RETURN THIS.
IT'S THE MONEY YOU SENT.
URRGH.
IT WAS THE SEA.
IT WAS ...
...THE SEA'S FAULT.
YOU PATHETIC WRETCH!
SHE WAS HAUNTED BY HER SON'S DEATH. SHE TOOK IT TO HER GRAVE.

FIK
AH
AH
A-A-ARGH
THAT WILL BE YOUR SCAR.
SO YOU'LL REMEMBER EACH AND EVERY DAY WHAT YOU DID.

FWOOSH

GIRLS
GOING SOMEWHERE?
DUNNO...
.....
YOU LIKE THE NIGHT?
IT'S MORE HONEST THAN THE DAY.
.....

HEY!
GOT ANY SPARE CHANGE?
FWISH
SORRY I ONLY GOT A HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL.
HA HA...
WELL...
GUESS WE'LL BE GOING THEN.

TMP TMP
TMP TMP
TMP TMP
CLAK

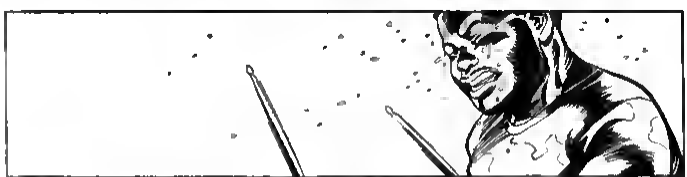
HUF
HUF
HUF
YOU BACK NOW?
YEAH, I'M BACK.
FWISH

I COULD TELL YOU WERE GOING SOMEWHERE YOU DIDN'T BELONG.
YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING INVOLVED W- A FREAK...
HA, WELL MAYBE I AM.

Chapter 3: THROW BACK

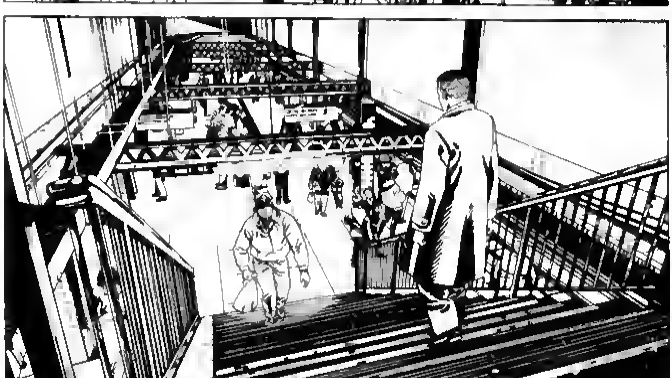
2:27 P.M. GRAND CENTRAL STATION

RECORD-BREAKING SNOWFALL. BUT THIS STATION POSSESSES THE VITALITY OF A THIRD-WORLD MARKETPLACE.

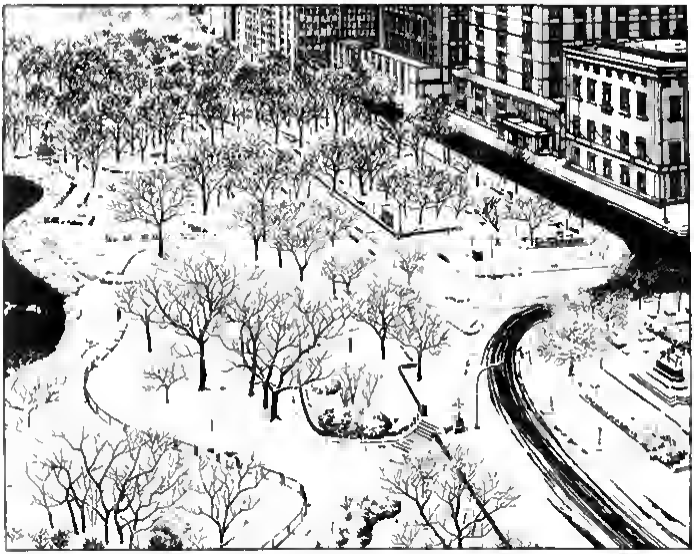


MANHATTAN. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE HERE. THERE'S NOTHING TO SELL IN THIS COUNTRY. AT LEAST NOTHING FOR BEGINNERS.

IN THE CROWDS, YOU CAN NO LONGER SEE THE ANGELS OR GODS.
BUT FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO FORGET THE HAUNTING EFFECT OF TIME,
IT'S PERFECT. THE YOUNG CAN SWEAT, THE RICH CAN TEST THEIR RICHES.



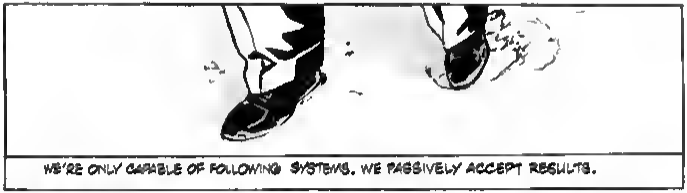
LOOK UP THE STREET NUMBER AND STEP INTO AN ALLEY. AS LONG
AS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, YOU'LL FIND YOUR GAME.


2:47 P.M. CENTRAL PARK.

IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE THE ASIAN MAN BEGAN FOLLOWING ME. I CAN FEEL...
...HIS MURDEROUS IMPULSE.

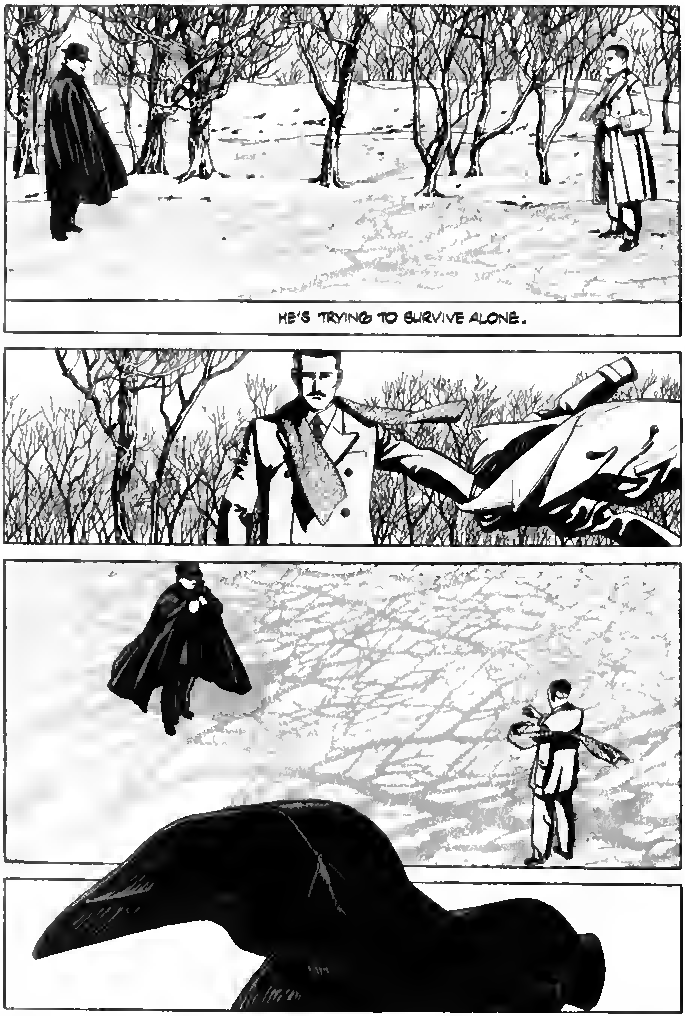
MURDER . A PRIMITIVE DESIRE . .

DESIRES OUR BUSINESS HAS OBLITERATED. WE NO LONGER KNOW HOW TO EXPRESS OUR PRIMITIVE NATURE .



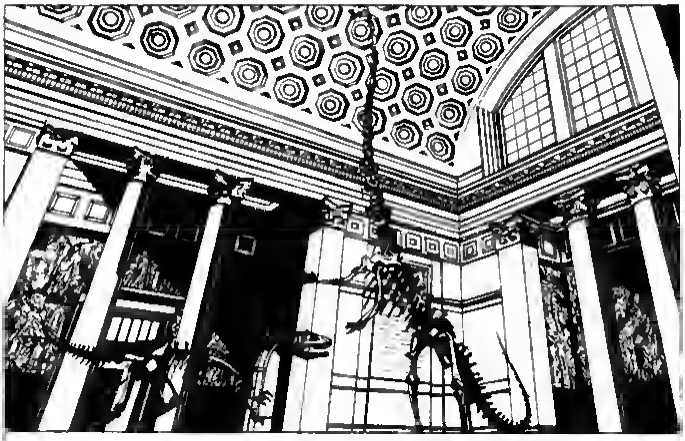
WE'RE ONLY CAPABLE OF FOLLOWING SYSTEMS. WE PASSIVELY ACCEPT RESULTS.

AND YET THIS MAN HERE...

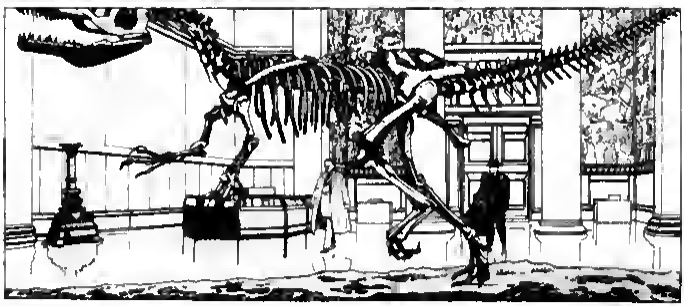

HE'S TRYING TO SURVIVE ALONE.

"WHERE DO WE FINISH?"
"WHERE THERE'S GAME."

3:56 P.M. THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

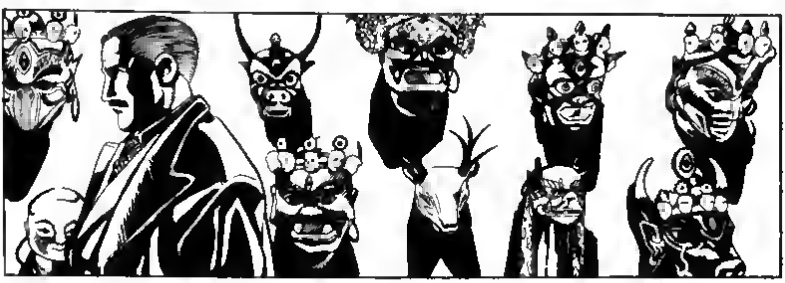


A NOBLE GRAVEYARD...



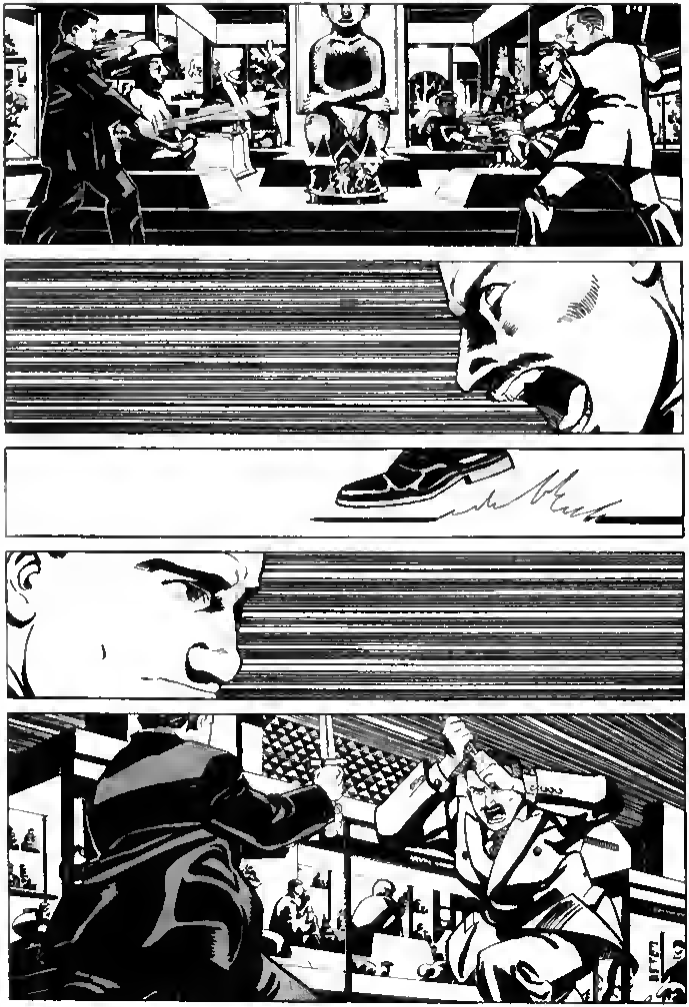
COUNTLESS SIMULATIONS OF LIFE SHINE IN THE DARKNESS...

IN HARMONY WITH HUMAN CIVILIZATION...

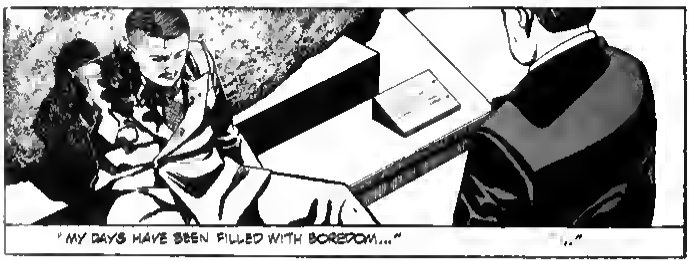


TIME LOST...

MY GRANDFATHER ONCE KILLED A MAN IN OKINAWA. MY FATHER, A MAN IN KOREA. I'VE NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY. BUT...
...TODAY I'LL KNOW

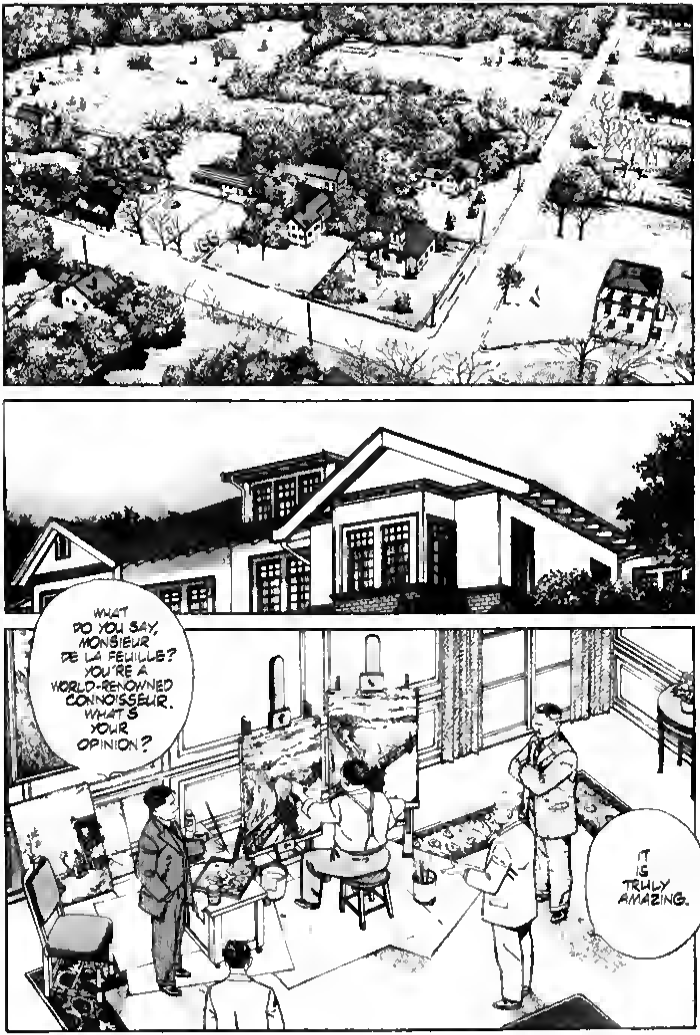


"WAR RUNS THROUGH MY BLOOD..."


"MY DAYS HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH BOREDOM..."

"GOOD BYE."

Chapter 4: THE CRY

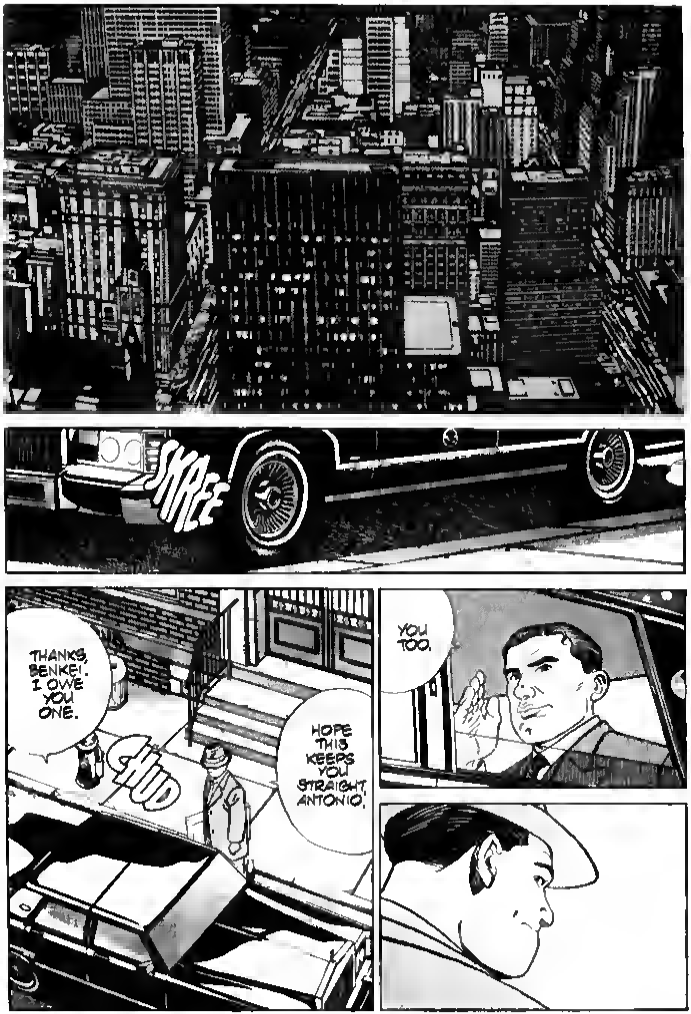

WHAT DO YOU SAY, MONSIEUR DE LA FEUILLE? YOU'RE A WORLD-RENOWNED CONNOISSEUR. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?
IT IS TRULY AMAZING.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT MUNCH WROTE IN HIS DIARY AFTER HE PAINTED THE SCREAM ?
AS THE SUN SET, THE CLOUDS BECAME SOAKED IN RED.
I FELT A SCREAM PIERCING NATURE.
I FELT I COULD HEAR THIS SCREAM.
I PAINTED THIS IMAGE.
I PAINTED THE CLOUDS AS IF THEY WERE MADE OF BLOOD.

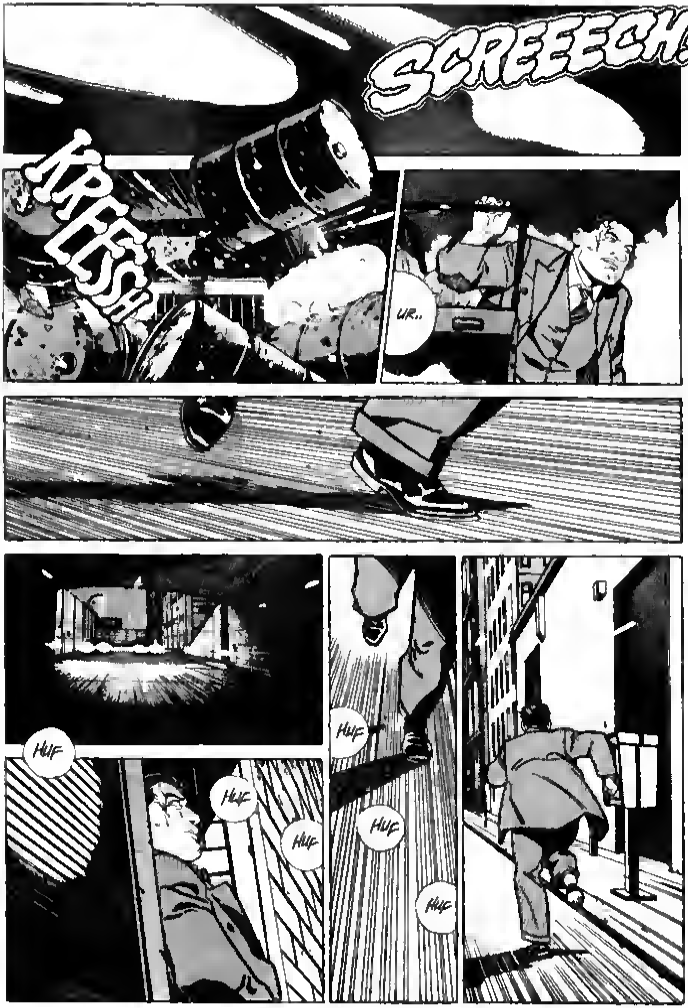
511
THE COLORS SCREAMED.
AMAZING. THIS ASIAN HAS COMPLETELY RECREATED THE EMOTIONS OF THE ANGST-RIDDEN NORWEGIAN.
I KNEW ANTONIO WOULD BE THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB.
UH, YOU MIND CHATTING SOMEWHERE ELSE?
I'LL BE FINISHED WITH THIS PRETTY SOON. YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF MY FEE AFTER THAT.
ANTONIO ...
WHERE'D YOU FIND THIS GUY?
NOW NOW, HE'S AN ARTIST.

YOU'RE PAINTING FOR ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL MEN IN THE CHINESE MAFIA.
HE'S ONE OF YOUR KIND. YOU SHOULD WORK HARD FOR HIM.
WHERE DOES THE ORIGINAL GO AFTER THIS?
BACK TO THE SICILIANS
TOO BAD... A MASTERPIECE... LOCKED UP BY THE MAFIA.
BENKEI, WE'RE IN A COMPLEX LINE OF WORK
SOMETIMES, A LITTLE LUXURY KEEPS US STRAIGHT
.....
MR. GANTINO ...
..LET'S HAVE A DRINK IN THE OTHER ROOM.

BENKEI ...
WHAT IS IT, MARIO?
YOU EITHER GOTTA BE FEARLESS
OR A TOTAL DUMBFUCK.
WHY?
PHOO!
GANTINO HEADS OPERATIONS ON THE ENTIRE EAST COAST. HE MIGHT LOOK LIKE A SWELL GUY, BUT HE MURDERED HIS WAY TO THE TOP.
WELL, HE MIGHT SEEM INVINCIBLE TO YOU...
BUT...
...THAT'S JUST AN IMAGE.


SKREE
THANKS, BENKEI. I OWE YOU ONE.
THUD
HOPE THIS KEEPS YOU STRAIGHT, ANTONIO.
YOU TOO.

thud
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MARIA.
FWOP
YOU'RE LATE!
YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IS?


SCREEECH!
KRRSH
UR..
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

RRRRR
RRRRR
WHAA
BENKEI!
IT'S ME! ANTONIO!
RRRRR
I'VE BEEN SET UP..!

BUDDA
BUDDA
Phone

CHOK!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
WHAT IS IT?
JUMP JUMP JUMP
BENKEI, IT'S ME, MARIO!
THEY WHACKED ANTONIO.. WE WAS SET UP!
Urgh
Urgh
WHEN WE WENT TO DELIVER THE PAINTING...
..WE GOT JUMPED BY FIVE CHINESE GUYS. ANTONIO GAVE 'EM THE PAINTING.

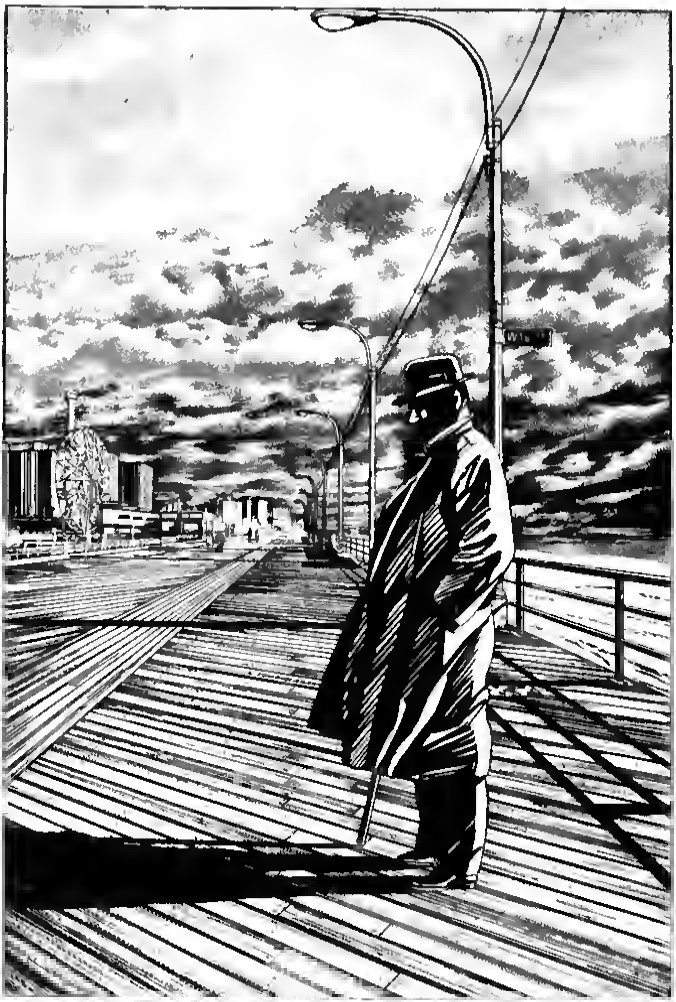
BUT GUESS WHO CHECKED IT FOR 'EM...
IT WAS THAT CREEP DE LA FEUILLE !
GANTINO'S UP TO HIS OLD TRICKS AGAIN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HE'S BEEN TRYING TO EXPAND HIS OPERATIONS FOR A WHILE NOW.
BUT HE GOT TIRED OF WAITING, SO HE JUST DECLARED WAR ON THE OTHER FAMILY, SO HE'D JUST HAVE AN EXCUSE TO CRUSH 'EM !
SKREECH
ANTONIO WAS AGAINST GANTINO FROM THE BEGINNING !

CHUD
EVER SINCE ANTONIO'S SISTER DIED FROM AN OVERDOSE, HE'S BEEN AGAINST DRUG-RUNNING.
BUT MY BOSS AND GANTINO JUST THOUGHT HE WAS IN THE WAY.
I DON'T GET IT.
WHY GO THROUGH ALL THESE SHENANIGANS JUST TO KILL ANTONIO?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. ANTONIO'S WIFE IS THE DAUGHTER OF THE BOSS IN PALERMO. THEY COULDN'T TOUCH HIM.
.....
SO GANTINO COOKED UP THIS PLOT.
HE GOT HIS HANDS ON THE MUNCH FROM THE ORIGINAL THIEVES, AND THEN HIRED ANTONIO TO DELIVER A FORGERY.
Gip
THEN HE ARRANGED IT SO IT'D LOOK LIKE THE CHINESE MAFIA KILLED HIM FOR IT.

RATTATTATTAT
SHOOT
MARIA, GET TO THE FIRE ESCAPE !!
FLIK
RATTATTA
TATTAT

RATATATATATAT
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
BENKEI! YOU ALL RIGHT?
HUF
HUF
YEAH, I'M FINE.

WE NEED TO FIND A PLACE TO HIDE OUT FOR A WHILE.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT.
WHAT RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
GANTINO'S GONNA WHACK YOU!
I NEED MY PAINT SUPPLIES!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'M GOING TO SET UP A MEETING WITH GANTINO.
YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR MIND.
YOU GOT A DEATH WISH?
HE'S FINALLY GOING TO GET A TASTE
...OF MUNCH'S BLOOD!



YOU'RE CALLING THE MAN WHO ORDERED YOU DEAD
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF GUTS.
IF YOU'D LAID LOW, I MIGHT HAVE CALLED OFF MY DOGS.
ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO HELP YOU OUT.
AFTER ALL, WHY OWN JUST A FORGERY?
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?
I PAINTED TWO FORGERIES.
INTERESTING. WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?
YOU KILLED ANTONIO TOO QUICKLY TO FIND OUT.

.....
THERE'S ALWAYS THE DANGER OF BEING KILLED IN THIS BUSINESS, SO...
...I LIKE TO HOLD ONTO THE ORIGINAL FOR A WHILE, AS INSURANCE.
AND YOU POSSESS THE ORIGINAL?
YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF. TOMORROW MORNING AT SIX O'CLOCK.
BRING YOUR PAINTING TO THE CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK.
YOU TAKE ME FOR AN IDIOT?
I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE OR NOT. ONCE THEY FIND OUT THE PAINTING YOU HAVE IS A FORGERY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GOING TO BE WHACKED NEXT.
I FIGURED YOU'D BE MY HIGHEST BIDDER.
.....
I GUESS I WAS WRONG GOODBYE.
HOLD ON!

AMAZING...
HOW DO YOU PAINT WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE ORIGINAL?
MY HAND REMEMBERS
I DON'T GET IT. YOU HAVE THIS AMAZING TALENT...
SO WHY DON'T I PAINT MY OWN WORK?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE THINKING?
IT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT FAME. IT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU, THOUGH.

NICE OF YOU TO COME.
ENOUGH WITH THE ATTITUDE.
I'M GONNA TEACH YOU A LESSON TODAY.

HAVE A LOOK, MR. CONNOISSEUR.
KRISK
.....
MR. GANTINO, MAY I SEE YOURS, NOW?!
WHAT?!
WELL, DE LA FEUILLE?

UNBELIEVABLE TWO ORIGINALS.
THAT CAN'T BE.
ON THE BACK OF THE PAINTING IS A SKETCH MUNCH ABANDONED
THERE ARE ALSO SIX STICKERS THERE.
.....
TURN IT AROUND.
FWIP
51
I DELIBERATELY LEFT OUT ONE OF THE NUMBERS ON THE FORGERY.
5! ...
FWIP

511
DE LA FEUILLE! WHICH ONE IS THE ORIGINAL?
.....
TH-THIS ONE IS...
WHAT?!
THIS
GIVE ME THAT!
SO THIS IS...
...THE ORIGINAL!!

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK, GIANTINO...
...AT MUNCH'S BLOOD-RED SKY!
FLIP

AEEE!
ARR..

.....
51
RRIP
511
NH-WHY... THAT'S
YOUR EYES HAVE GONE BAD, DE LA FEUILLE.

Chapter 5: SWORD FISH

WELCOME TO SICILY, BENKEI.
IT'S AN HONOR.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVITATION.
MR. TROIA WOULD LIKE TO HIRE YOU, BENKEI.
IT DEPENDS ON THE CONDITIONS.

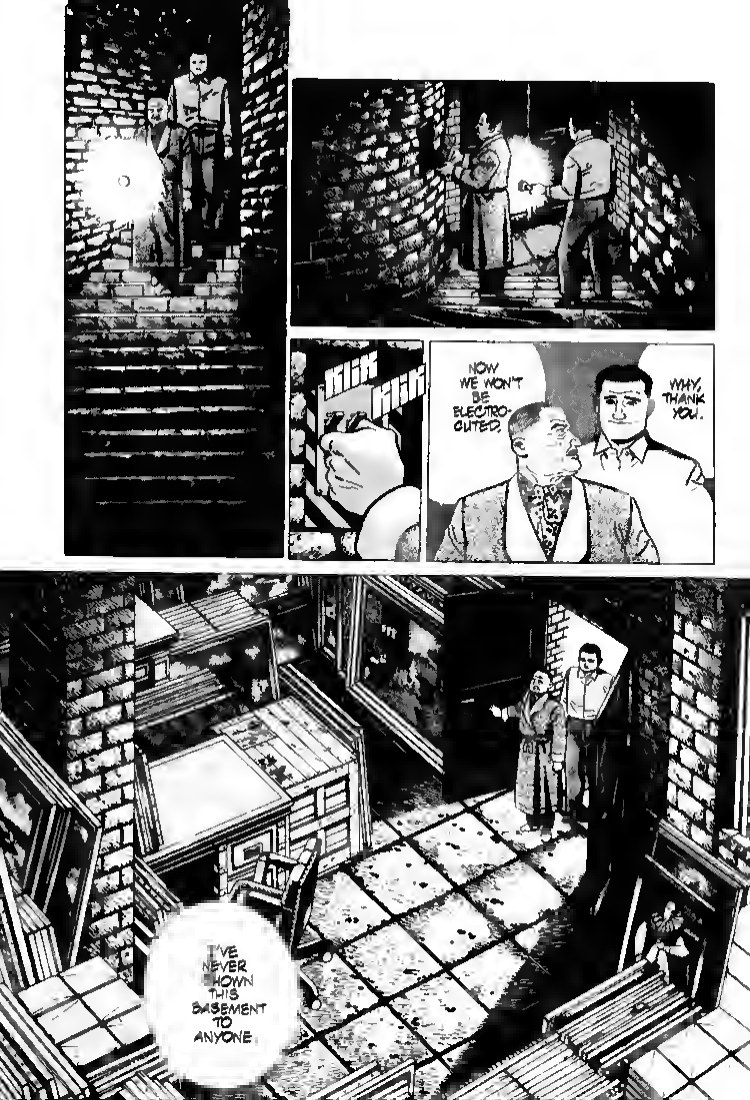
WOW!
A SWORD-FISH...!
...CAUGHT TODAY IN YOUR HONOR.
YOU BETTER EAT IT ALL, OR YOU'LL BE THE ONE ON THE TABLE. HA HA!
THAT'S ENOUGH, SORCHI.
YES, SIR
I HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS MEAL!

SO BENKEI...
I UNDERSTAND YOU DON'T USE GUNS.
GUNS KILL AUTOMATICALLY WITHOUT THINKING.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I DO.
BUT WHETHER YOU USE GUNS OR BOMBS, THE RESULTS ARE THE SAME. THE VICTIMS END UP IN HELL.
FOR ME, MEANS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ENDS.
I CONSIDER MY WORK A KIND OF... DIALOGUE.
WHEN YOU GO AGAINST YOUR OPPONENT, YOU HAVE TO FEEL THE PRESS OF HIS BLOOD, AND HIS PAIN.
.....
OTHERWISE, YOU'VE GAINED NOTHING.

...
HA HA HA HA
SO YOU CONSIDER KILLING AN ART, EH?
...
TO ME, ONE PULLS THE TRIGGER ...
...SIMPLY OUT OF FEAR.
HA! HA HAHA HA!

BRRRRR
BRRRRR
BRRRRR
BRRRRR
IS IT TRUE?
I HEAR TROIA'S INVITED BENKEI TO SICILY.
IT'S TRUE. THAT BENKEI'S A STRANGE ONE.
HE HAD THE HEAD OF THE SWORDFISH WE ATE FOR DINNER DISPLAYED IN HIS GARDEN.
WHAT'S TROIA UP TO?
BEATS ME.
HE'S GOT TOO MUCH TIME TO KILL THESE DAYS IF YOU ASK ME.

I THINK YOU SHOULD GET RID OF THIS BENKEI.
WHY?
I HEAR HE CAN JUST LOOK AT A PAINTING ...
...AND PAINT A PERFECT FORGERY IN A COUPLE OF DAYS.
REALLY?
AND HE CAN BITE LIKE A RABID DOG.
HE KILLED GANTINO, YOU KNOW.
AND THEN HE HAD THE NERVE TO DROP OFF THE PAINTING GANTINO STOLE AT A MUSEUM.
GANTINO'S BROTHER WANTED REVENGE. HE HIRED TWO KILLERS, BUT THEY NEVER RETURNED.
HE SOUNDS TOUGH.
CAN YOU GET GRECO OVER HERE?
DING DONG
OOOO!

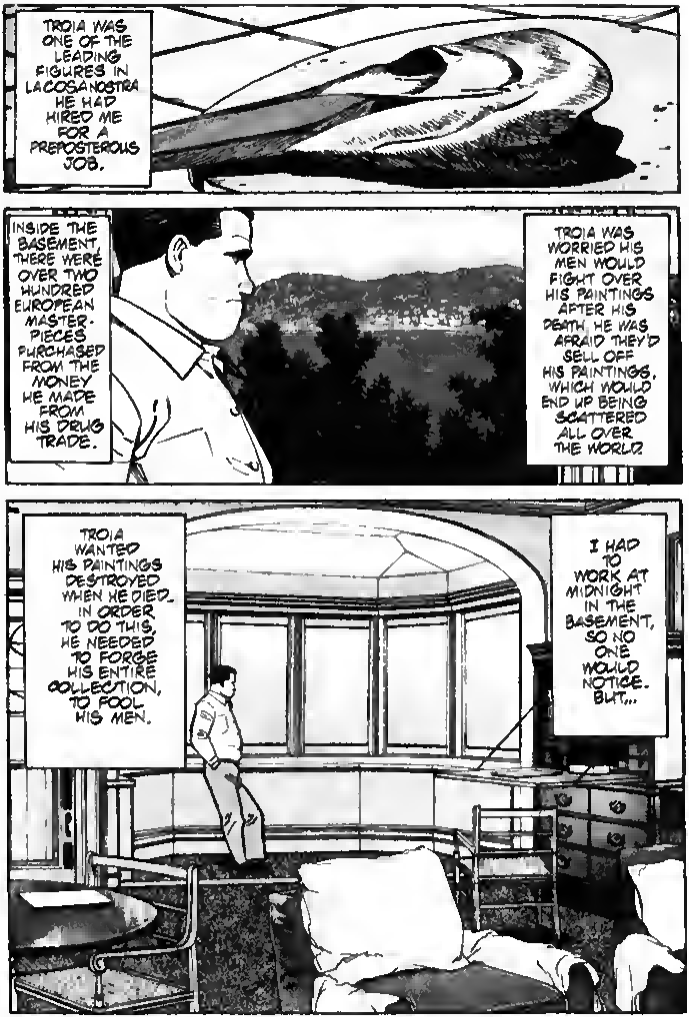

CLK
click click
NOW WE WON'T BE ELECTROCUTED.
WHY, THANK YOU.
I'VE NEVER KNOWN THIS BASEMENT TO ANYONE.

NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THESE PAINTINGS
I SHOW THEM TO YOU BECAUSE I TRUST YOU.
DO YOU KNOW HOW I GOT TO WHERE I AM TODAY?
I DON'T ASK ABOUT MY CLIENTS' LIVES.
THAT SHOULD BE PART OF YOUR JOB.
.....
RIP
RIP
RIP
I WAS BORN IN THE GHETTO OF PALERMO.
I HAD TO RANSACK GARBAGE WITH MY FATHER EVER SINCE I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD.
AT TEN, I WORKED LONG DAYS AS A CARPENTER.
BUT BY THE TIME I TURNED FIFTEEN I FOUND MYSELF UNEMPLOYED...
...BECAUSE MY BOSS FOUND YOUNGER KIDS WHO WOULD WORK MORE CHEAPLY.

I DIDN'T WANT TO END UP LIKE MY FATHER...
..A DRUNKARD
...
I SMUGGLED MY WAY INTO THE U.S...
I WAS ILLITERATE
ITALIAN, ENGLISH, IT DIDN'T MATTER
WHERE I LIVED DIDN'T MATTER
I WAS SO POOR, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WANTED

TROIA..
WHICH HAND WILL BE PULLING THE TRIGGER?
I SWEAR THAT I WILL NEVER
BREAK THE OATH OF LA COSA NOSTRA

THOSE WHO LEARN HOW TO LIVE PROPERLY...
..NEVER CHOOSE TO ENTER OUR KIND OF LIFE.
YOU UNDER-STAND
...
HUMAN BEINGS ARE FRAIL.
AFTER WE'VE HAD OUR FILL, WE CAN AFFORD A CONSCIENCE
THEN WE SEE HOW FUTILE THINGS ARE
NOTHING BUT THESE PAINTINGS CAN SAVE ME


TROIA WAS ONE OF THE LEADING FIGURES IN LACOSANOSTRA HE HAD HIRED ME FOR A PREPOSTEROUS JOB.
INSIDE THE BASEMENT, THERE WERE OVER TWO HUNDRED EUROPEAN MASTER-PIECES PURCHASED FROM THE MONEY HE MADE FROM HIS DRUG TRADE.
TROIA WAS WORRIED HIS MEN WOULD FIGHT OVER HIS PAINTINGS AFTER HIS DEATH. HE WAS AFRAID THEY'D SELL OFF HIS PAINTINGS, WHICH WOULD END UP BEING SCATTERED ALL OVER THE WORLD.
TROIA WANTED HIS PAINTINGS DESTROYED WHEN HE DIED. IN ORDER TO DO THIS, HE NEEDED TO FORGE HIS ENTIRE COLLECTION, TO FOOL HIS MEN.
I HAD TO WORK AT MIDNIGHT IN THE BASEMENT, SO NO ONE WOULD NOTICE. BUT...

HEY, BENKEI.
WHEN CAN WE GO BACK TO NEW YORK?
I DON'T KNOW.
WHEN I'M DONE WITH MY WORK, I GUESS.
I'M REALLY BORED.
WE GOT TO GO OUT TODAY.
YEAH, BUT THAT GUY'S WITH US EVERYWHERE WE GO.
WELL, THIS IS MAFIA ISLAND.
THEY'RE JUST LOOKING AFTER US.

WHAT? WE'RE ALREADY GOING BACK?
YOU SHOULDN'T GO OUT AT NIGHT.
I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY.
THIS PLACE IS REALLY BORING.
NO TIFFANY'S, NO YANKEE STADIUM.
ENOUGH, MARIA.
DAMN!

BEEEEP
BEEEEP
COME ON, SPEED UP!
VROOM
BEEEEP
!
FWOOM

CRASH
Huh!
CHAK
CHAK

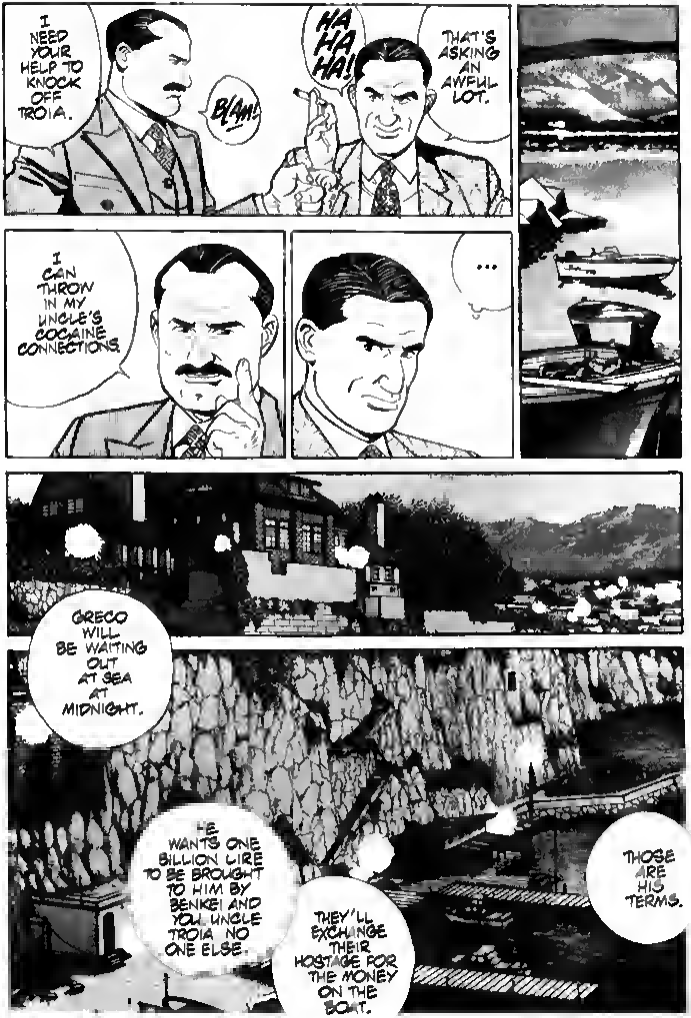
BUDDA BUDDA
VIP
VIP
VIP
FUMP
ARGH!
TUC
KRAK
BUDDA BUDDA

CHUD!
UNBELIEVABLE!!
WHO'D DARE TO ATTACK ONE OF OUR GUESTS IN SICILY?
I BELIEVE GRECO'S MEN KIDNAPPED THE WOMAN.

HE HAS A VENDETTA AGAINST BENKEI FOR THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER IN NEW YORK.
UNCLE TROIA, YOU WERE TOO CARELESS.
WE SHOULDN'T HAVE HIRED THIS MAN AND INVITED HIM TO SICILY.
I NEED HIM AROUND, SORCHI.
VERY WELL, THEN, I'LL SET UP A MEETING WITH GRECO.
WHAT KIND OF CONDITIONS SHOULD WE AGREE TO?
I'LL PAY ANY AMOUNT HE ASKS FOR.
LET'S HOPE IT CAN BE RESOLVED THAT WAY.
I'LL MEET FACE TO FACE WITH GRECO...
...AND SEE IF WE CAN WORK THIS OUT.
.....
CHAK

CHUD
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY ABOUT THIS, BENKEI.
DON'T BE.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
WHAT I DON'T GET IS...
...IF IT WAS GRECO, WHY DIDN'T HE TRY TO KILL ME?
..
LET'S SEE WHAT SORCHI COMES UP WITH.
BY THE WAY, I NEVER ASKED.
WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A FAMILY?
I DID, BUT MY WIFE AND CHILDREN WERE KILLED.
I'M SORRY.
MAY I ASK YOU ANOTHER QUESTION?
OF ALL THE PAINTINGS IN THE BASEMENT, WHICH ONE DO YOU LIKE BEST?

WHY DO YOU ASK?
JUST IN CASE I END UP LOSING AN ARM OR TWO FROM ALL THIS...
...I PROMISE YOU, I'LL FINISH THAT ONE PAINTING.
...
IT'S "MOTHER'S CARE" BY JEAN-FRANCOIS MILLET.
SO GRECO...
...I'VE DECIDED TO HELP YOU KILL BENKEI.
I SEE. WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?


I NEED YOUR HELP TO KNOCK OFF TROIA.
BLAM!
HA HA HA!
THAT'S ASKING AN AWFUL LOT.
I CAN THROW IN MY UNCLE'S COCAINE CONNECTIONS.
...
GRECO WILL BE WAITING OUT AT SEA AT MIDNIGHT.
HE WANTS ONE BILLION LIRE TO BE BROUGHT TO HIM BY BENKEI AND YOU, UNCLE TROIA. NO ONE ELSE.
THEY'LL EXCHANGE THEIR HOSTAGE FOR THE MONEY ON THE BOAT.
THOSE ARE HIS TERMS.

I'M GOING TO ACCOMPANY GRECO TO KEEP AN EYE ON MARIA.
THAT'S NICE OF YOU
SO YOU'LL BE THEIR GUIDE.
THAT'S THE WAY HE WANTS IT.
DO YOU WANT TO SEE HER DEAD?
I'LL GIVE THE LIGHT SIGNALS ONCE WE'RE OUT AT SEA.
I SHOULD GET GOING.
BENKEI ...
JUST IN CASE.
SORRY. NO GUNS FOR ME.

KRAK
THIS'LL BE MY GUN.
BENKEI, THERE'S THE SIGNAL.
TAKE THE BOAT OUT!
GUG
GUG
GUG!!

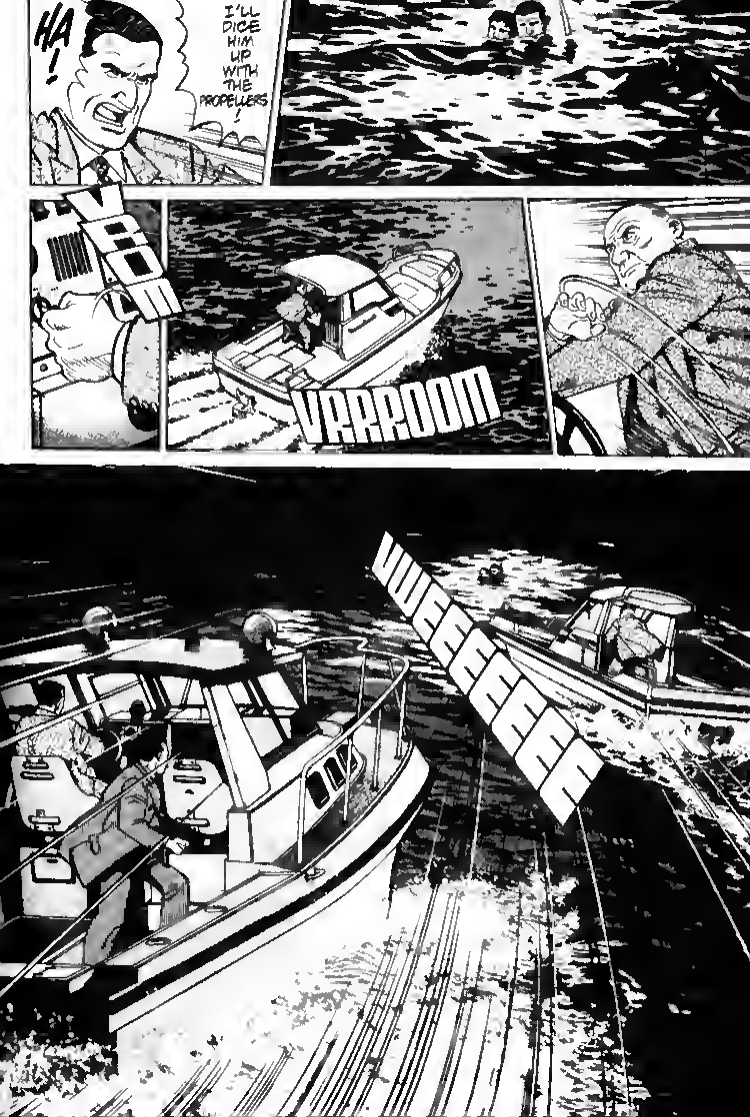
BENKEI!!
HERE, BENKEI.
I'M GIVING HER BACK TO YOU AS PROMISED.
SPOOSH
AIEE!
FWOOSH

SPLASH
GRECO, YOU'RE GOING AGAINST YOUR WORD!
THIS ISN'T SICILY!
WE'RE AT SEA!
SORCHI!!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, SORCHI?

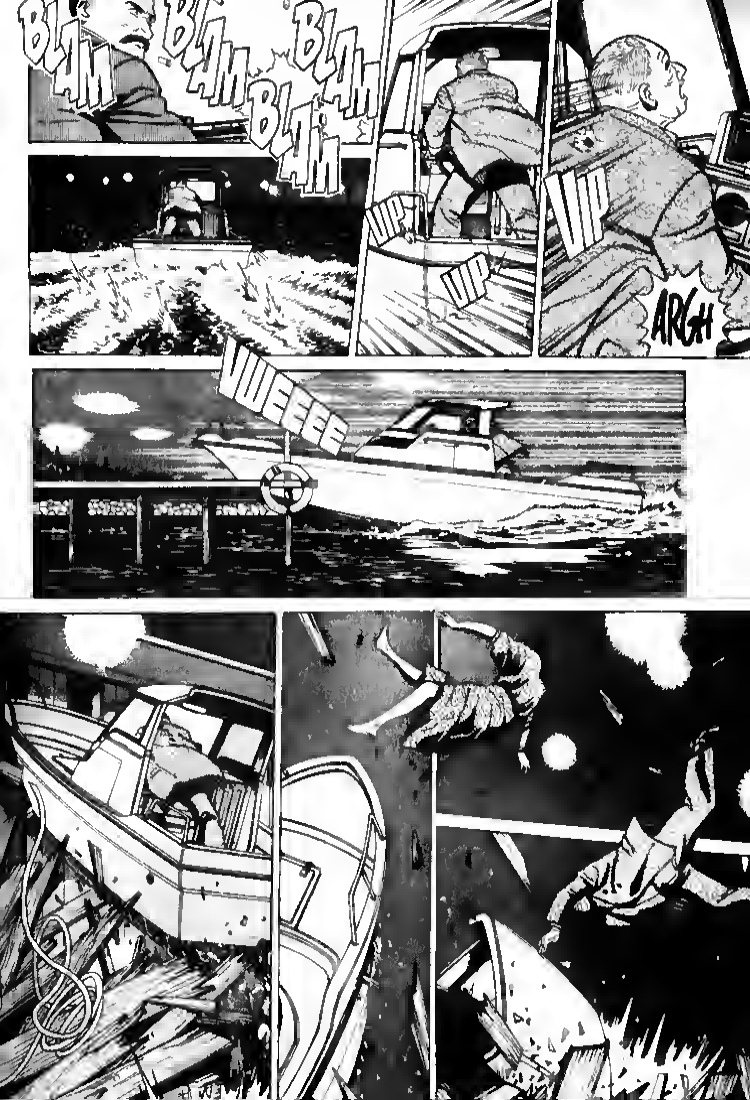
I SEE...
I HAD A HUNCH IT WAS YOU.
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE OVER THE HILL...
...I NEVER ONCE DOUBLE-CROSSED YOU.
THAT'S WHY I INTENDED ON LEAVING MY ESTATE TO YOU.
BUT I WANT EVERY-THING!
YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSIONS?
...
THE PAINTINGS IN THE BASEMENT?
I CAN'T...
...GIVE YOU THAT
AS YOU WISH, THEN.
YOU WILL DIE.

WOOSH
THUMP
SPLASH
GUH
TOTO!
FOOM
SHWP!

IT'S HIM!
VROOM
WEEEEEEEE
HE'S UNDER THE BOAT!
FFH


HA!
I'LL DICE HIM UP WITH THE PROPELLERS!
VROOM
VRRROOM
VUEEEEEE

WHOA!
VWEEEEEEEEEEEE
HEY!
CATCH THEM!
WEEEEEEEEEEEEEE


BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
VIP
VIP
VIP
ARGH
VUEEEE

VROOM
WHERE'S BENKE!
?
KRUCH
KRUCH
KRUCH

?!
ARGH !!
GRECO !
FWSH
TSHH
BEHAVE !

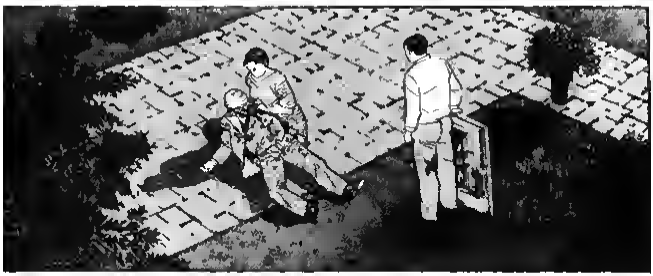
UP
FISH
NOW YOU SEE.
...HOW GUNS ARE STRONGER THAN MEN.
GET UP
LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THE OLD MAN'S PAINTINGS
KLAK
Ur.
Urgh.

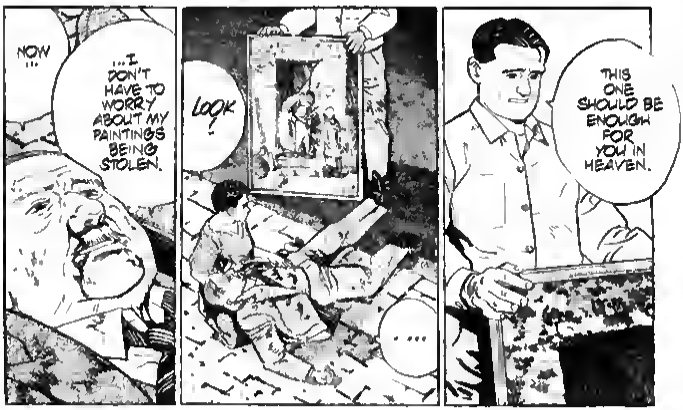
INCREDIBLE!

WHAT'S ALL THIS WORTH?
THERE AREN'T ENOUGH DIGITS IN LIRA CURRENCY TO COUNT.

HA HA HA!
HA HA HA!
IT'S ALL MINE NOW!

IT'S NOT!
FWOOSH
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
POK POK
FWOOSH
AIEEE!




NOW ...
...I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MY PAINTINGS BEING STOLEN.
LOOK!
....
THIS ONE SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR YOU IN HEAVEN.

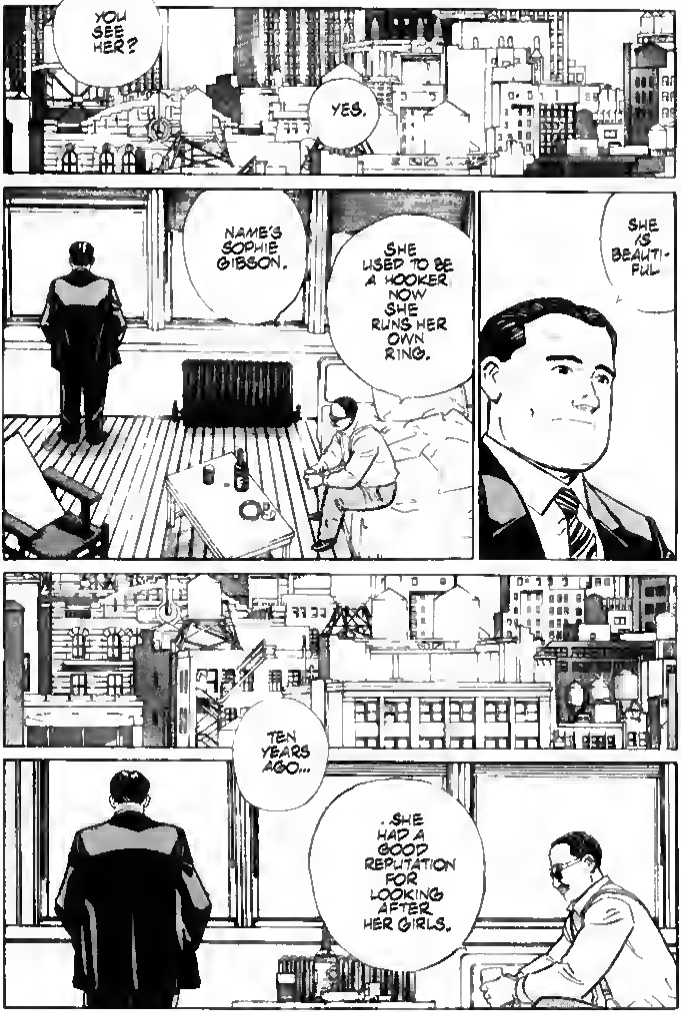
YES...
I GREW UP IN HORRIBLE CONDITIONS
...BUT I HAD A WONDERFUL MOTHER
DO YOU BELIEVE ME?

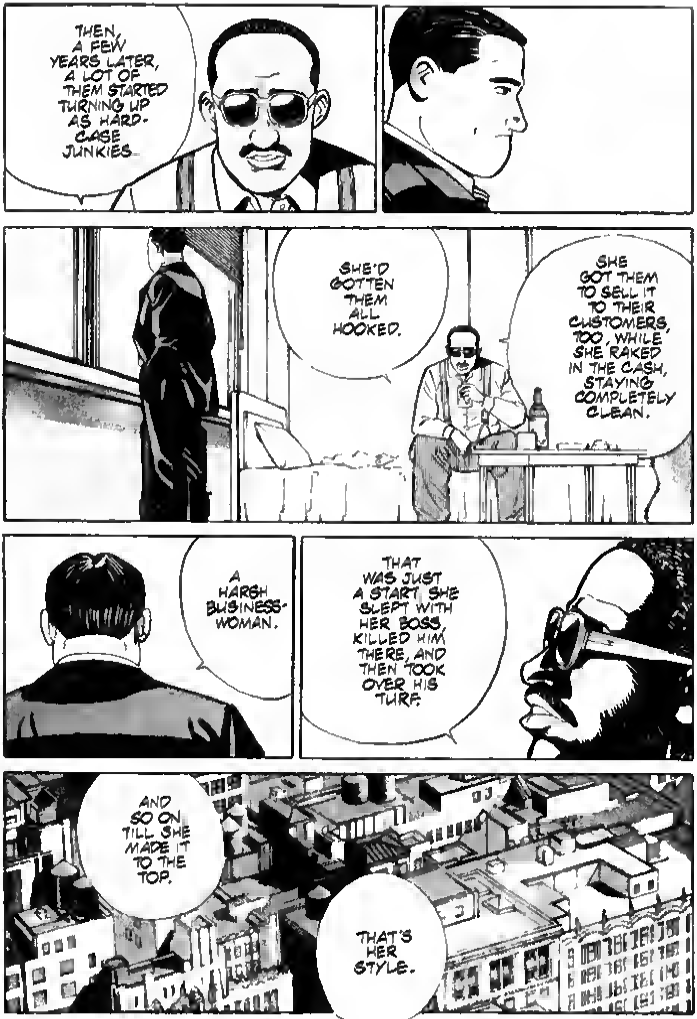
Chapter 6: NECKLACE

"YOU TELLING ME THAT'S HIP?
"IT AIN'T FOR ME.
"IT REMINDS ME TOO MUCH OF THE WETLANDS.
"THE JUNGLE-BOOTS NIGHT-MARE."
TAH
TAH
TAH
TAH
TAH

TAK
TAK
RRRRRRRRRRRR
FWIK
PHOO
HEY BRO, I GOT A JOB FOR YOU.

CHUD


YOU SEE HER?
YES.
NAME'S SOPHIE GIBSON.
SHE USED TO BE A HOOKER. NOW SHE RUNS HER OWN RING.
SHE IS BEAUTIFUL
TEN YEARS AGO...
SHE HAD A GOOD REPUTATION FOR LOOKING AFTER HER GIRLS.


THEN, A FEW YEARS LATER, A LOT OF THEM STARTED TURNING UP AS HARD-CASE JUNKIES.
SHE'D GOTTEN THEM ALL HOOKED.
SHE GOT THEM TO SELL IT TO THEIR CUSTOMERS, TOO, WHILE SHE RAKED IN THE CASH, STAYING COMPLETELY CLEAN.
A HARSH BUSINESS-WOMAN.
THAT WAS JUST A START. SHE SLEPT WITH HER BOSS, KILLED HIM THERE, AND THEN TOOK OVER HIS TURF.
AND SO ON TILL SHE MADE IT TO THE TOP.
THAT'S HER STYLE.

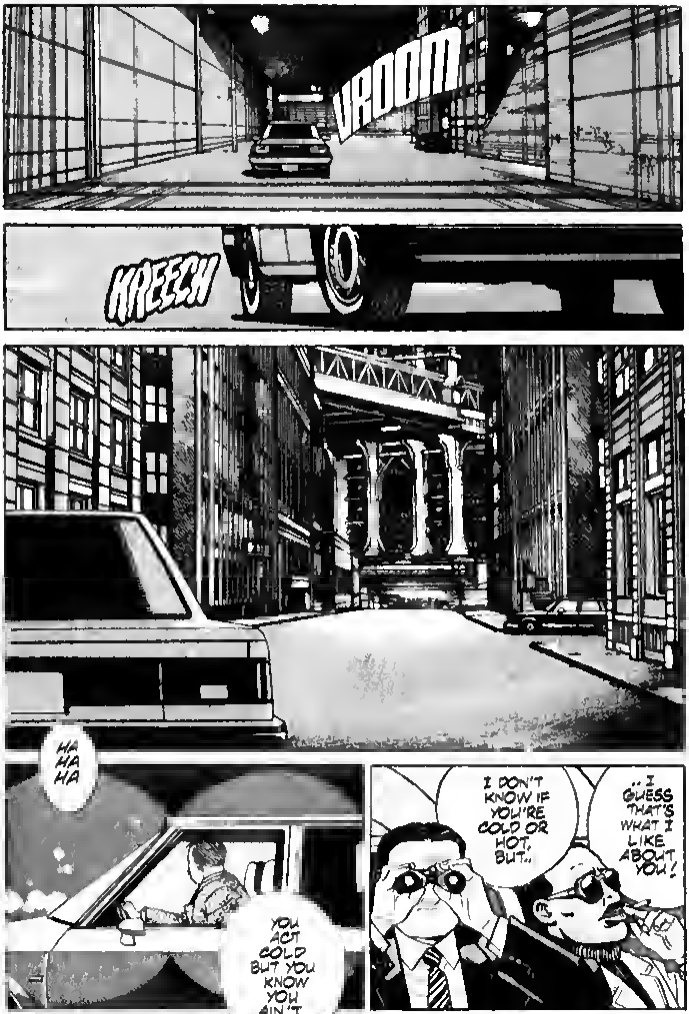
WHY DO YOU WANT HER DEAD?
SIX MONTHS AGO THERE WAS A COCAINE-WAR SHOOTOUT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.
I REMEMBER.
IN NEW JERSEY
THE CHILD WHO WAS ACCIDENTALLY SHOT. WAS MINE.
...
I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T DO THIS JOB.
WHY?
I CAN'T PROVE IF SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE OR NOT.
BUT I SAW HER DO IT!

LET THE POLICE HANDLE THIS.
THEY CAN'T BE BOTHERED.
THEY'RE TOO BUSY COVERING THEIR OWN ASSES.
HERE'S A CHECK FOR TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS
USE THAT MONEY TO RAISE ANOTHER KID.
...
I'M NOT A VIGILANTE.
KLAKETA KLAKETA
I SEE.
SO YOU TURNED DOWN THE JOB?
YES.
I FOLLOWED HIM AROUND LATER. HE SAID HE WAS FROM JERSEY BUT HE HAD VERMONT PLATES.

HE WAS LYING.
I HAVE TO GET BACK TO MY PAINTING.
I DON'T THINK...
...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FOR A WHILE.
...
HE WON'T GIVE UP. HE WANTS HER DEAD.
I COULD SMELL THE MURDER ON HIM.
I KNOW.
BETTE MIDLER
VIET NAM
69-70
QUANG TRI
I'M SORRY, BUT...
...I'M NOT CONVINCED.
WAIT!

FWA
SLISH SLISH SLISH
ARICH

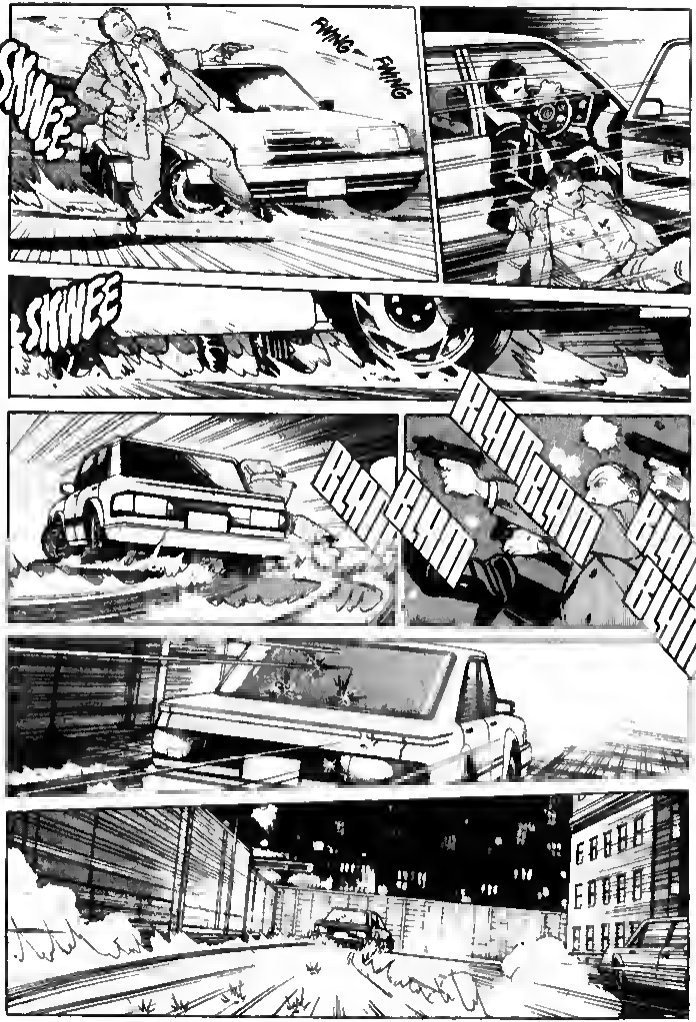
CHAK
IT WAS THE SILENCE OF MISERY.
WE'RE ALL SLAVES TO SOMETHING.
FWIK
...
Phoo.
AFTER I LOST MY EYES IN NAM, I FINALLY SAW THE WAY THE WORLD REALLY WORKS.
A HORSE WITH ITS ASS ON FIRE IS GOING TO KICK UP A SHITSTORM.
...
VIETNAM 59-75 QUANG TRI
IT'S GOING DOWN TONIGHT BY THE EAST RIVER.


VROOM
KREECH
HA HA HA
YOU ACT COLD BUT YOU KNOW YOU AIN'T.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE COLD OR HOT, BUT...
...I GUESS THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU!

SHE'S HERE.
HEY...
...YOU GOTTA HAVE A TASTE FOR LIFE.
THE BONES OF OUR PAST ...
...CARRY VIOLENCE.
BITTER OLD BONES AND BLOOD.
BLOOD IS BLOOD WHEN IT POURS OUT.
YOU CAN'T DENY YOUR EMOTIONS.
WHOA!
WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?

THAT'S HIM OUTSIDE HIS CAR.
WHAT'S HE UP TO?
IT'S OBVIOUS.
HE'S GOING TO SHOOT AT A MAFIA BOSS WITH A HUNDRED DOLLAR PISTOL.
IDIOT!
COUNTRY BOY.
TCH!
FING

SKREE
SOPHIE!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM


SKWEE
FWING - FWING
SKWEE
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

I COULD TAKE YOU TO A DOCTOR I KNOW, BUT...
KOFF
...IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE.
FORGET ABOUT IT.

I'M... SATISFIED.

WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

...IN LOVE.

KOFF
SOPHIE AND I WERE...

WE GREW UP TOGETHER, IN A SMALL TOWN IN VERMONT. IT SEEMS LIKE SUCH A LONG TIME AGO.
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GET MARRIED.
KOFF
ONE WINTER FIFTEEN YEARS AGO...
...SOPHIE MET THIS FELLOW FROM NEW YORK WHO WAS ON VACATION SKIING.
KRACK
KRACK
KRACK

DING DONG
MERRY CHRIST-MAS!
SHE BETRAYED ME.
BY THE TIME HER PARENTS FOUND HER LETTER, SHE WAS ALREADY GONE.

SO YOU'RE GETTING BACK AT HER AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?
KOFF
N-NO...
LATELY ...
...A LOT OF GIRLS HAVE BEEN LEAVING OUR TOWN FOR NEW YORK BUT THEY NEVER COME BACK.
THEY TURN UP AS HOOKERS, JUNKIES, OR DEAD.
THEY'D ALL FALLEN IN LOVE WITH SOPHIE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE ENDED UP LIKE THIS.
BUT I COULDN'T LET HER DO THIS ANYMORE.
WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME?
I WAS ASHAMED.
LIFE IN VERMONT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY.
KOF

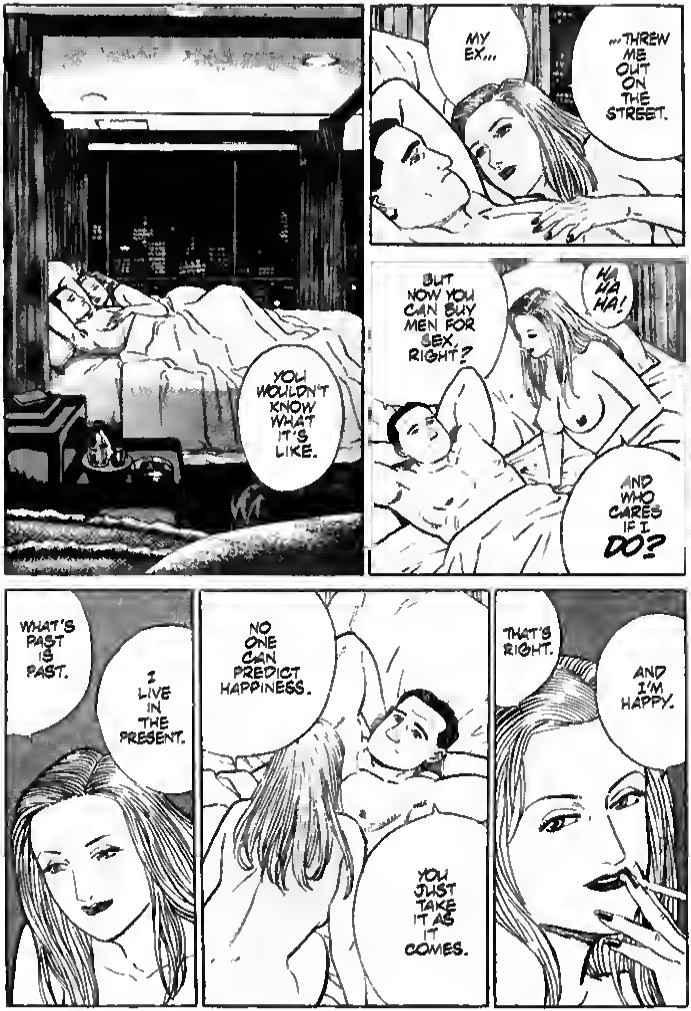
TAKE IT EASY, MAN.
KOFF
SHE DIDN'T REMEMBER ME.
...I STILL LOVE HER.
PLEASE...
HER EYES WERE FILLED WITH HATRED, GLARING AT ME AS IF I WERE SOME STRAY DOG.
KOFF
BUT...
...GIVE THIS TO HER.
...
SH- SHE REALLY...
...USED TO BE...
KOFF
...RATHER KIND.
...

WHAT RE YOU GONNA DO NOW ?
BENKEI ?
I'M GOING TO GIVE HER THE NECK-LACE.
HA HA!
OF COURSE.
YOU KNOW, YOU LUCKED OUT WITH THIS ONE.
I COULDN'T SAY IT IN FRONT OF HIM, BUT I HEAR SHE'S GOT A THING FOR ASIAN MEN.

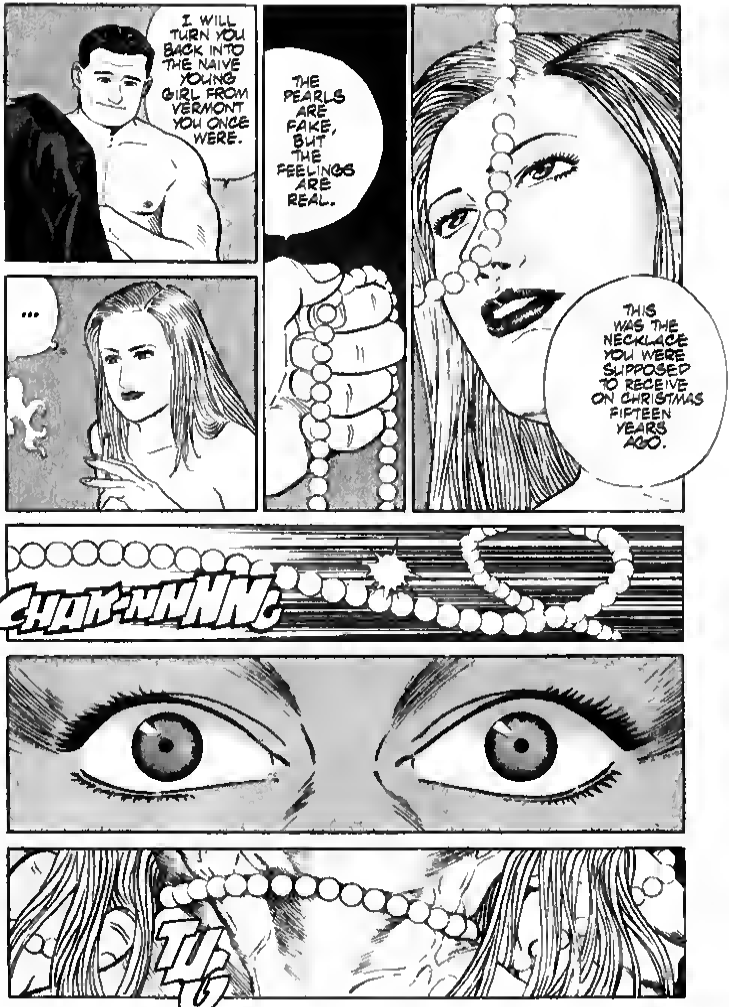
HEY...
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
WOW!
IS THAT FOR ME?
NO, FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.
AH, MAN!
THIS WOULDN'T SUIT YOU. IT'S STRINGED WITH PIANO WIRE.
TO STRANGLE SOMEBODY WITH LOVE.
OH. UH, WHY?

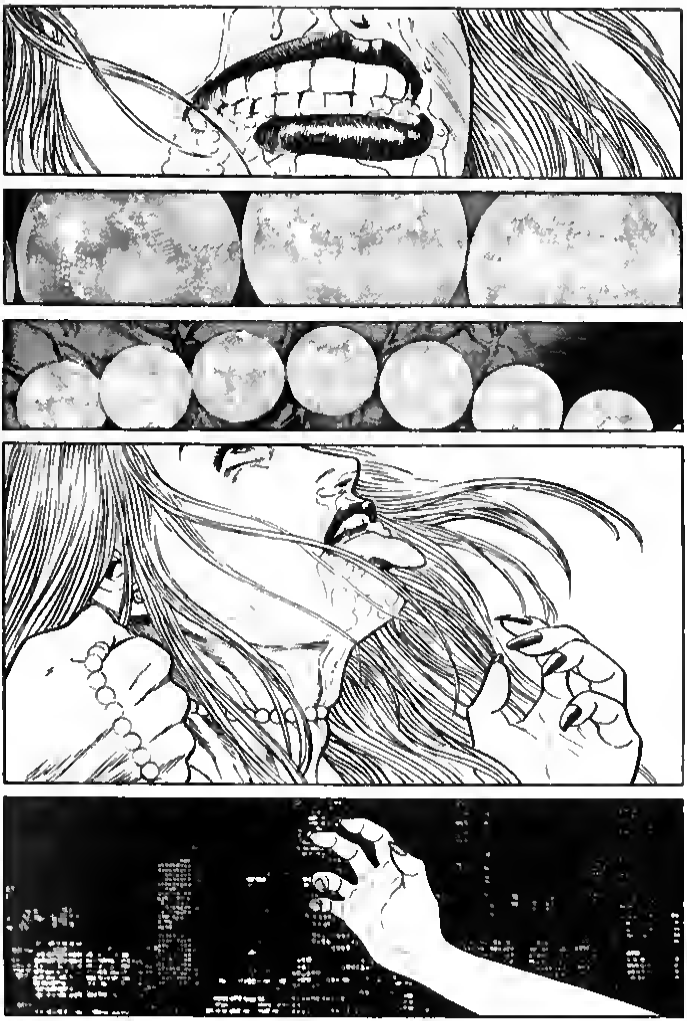
CHEERS!
YOU'RE A COOL ONE.
MOST MEN PEE IN THEIR PANTS WHEN THEY SEE MY PLACE.

WHY?
BECAUSE YOU'RE SO RICH?
OR BECAUSE OF THOSE GUYS OUTSIDE THE DOOR?
HEY!
GIMME A BREAK!
I LIKE...
...ASIAN MEN...
...WHO AREN'T SLAVES.


YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE.
MY EX...
...THREW ME OUT ON THE STREET.
BUT NOW YOU CAN BUY MEN FOR SEX, RIGHT?
HA HA HA!
AND WHO CARES IF I DO?
WHAT'S PAST IS PAST.
I LIVE IN THE PRESENT.
NO ONE CAN PREDICT HAPPINESS.
YOU JUST TAKE IT AS IT COMES.
THAT'S RIGHT.
AND I'M HAPPY.

IT'S EASY TO DECEIVE YOURSELF AND FORGET OTHERS GAIN AND SUFFER FROM YOUR ACTIONS.
HAPPINESS MIGHT BE BEAUTIFUL WHEN IT'S YOURS.
...
BUT AS SOON AS YOU STOP SENSING HOW OTHERS FEEL YOU BEGIN TO ROT.
FUKI
HA HA HA!
HA HAHA HA!
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN CHANGE ME, THEN CHANGE ME, MR. ZEN MASTER.
I'LL PUT A SPELL ON YOU, THEN.
HOW NICE.

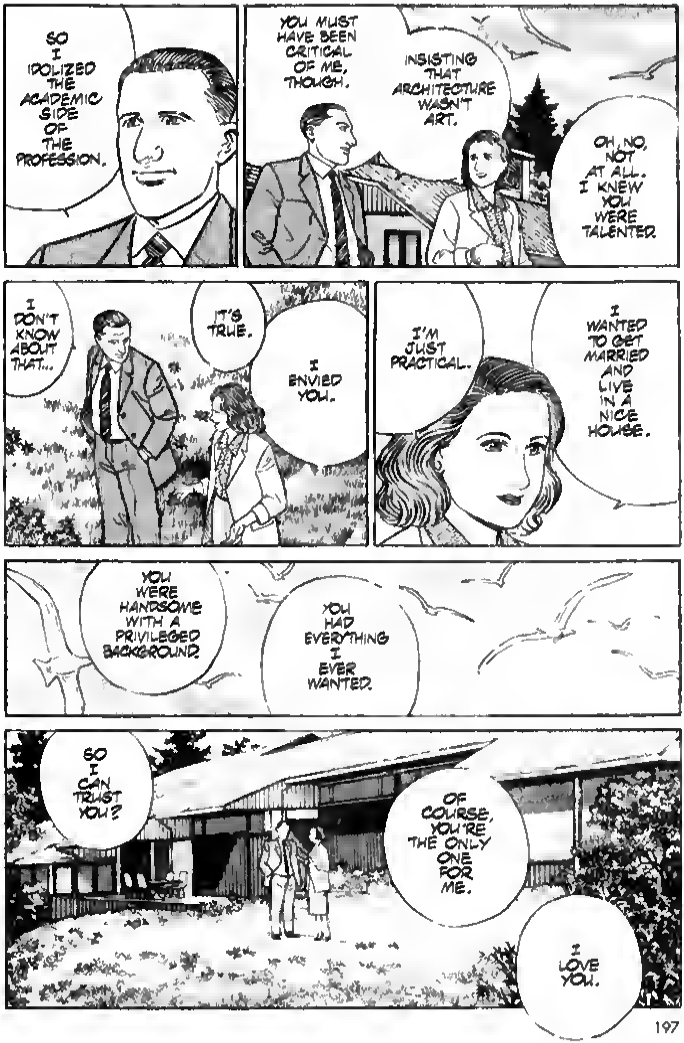

I WILL TURN YOU BACK INTO THE NAIVE YOUNG GIRL FROM VERMONT YOU ONCE WERE.
THE PEARLS ARE FAKE, BUT THE FEELINGS ARE REAL.
THIS WAS THE NECKLACE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE ON CHRISTMAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.
...
CHAK-NNNNG
TUG



HEY, BROTHER
CAN YOU SEE THOSE TWO?
VIETNAM
THEY'RE BACK IN VERMONT
...LYING UNDER THE SNOW, ASLEEP IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS.

Chapter 7: A BASEMENT

WOW, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
YEP.
THIS SUMMER HOUSE WAS BUILT WHEN WE WERE SENIORS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.
BACK THEN I WAS DRAWING AVANT-GARDE DESIGNS THAT WERE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO BUILD..
TO PLEASE MY POST-STRUCTURALIST PROFESSOR.
I WAS YOUNG.
MY DAD WAS ONE OF THE MOST WELL-KNOWN COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTS IN NEW YORK.


SO I IDOLIZED THE ACADEMIC SIDE OF THE PROFESSION.
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF ME, THOUGH.
INSISTING THAT ARCHITECTURE WASN'T ART.
OH, NO, NOT AT ALL. I KNEW YOU WERE TALENTED.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...
IT'S TRUE.
I ENVIED YOU.
I'M JUST PRACTICAL.
I WANTED TO GET MARRIED AND LIVE IN A NICE HOUSE.
YOU WERE HANDSOME WITH A PRIVILEGED BACKGROUND.
YOU HAD EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED.
SO I CAN TRUST YOU?
OF COURSE, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE FOR ME.
I LOVE YOU.

MY FATHER...
JUST BOUGHT AN ISLAND IN MAINE.
WOW.
THAT'S AMAZING.
HE WANTS ME TO DESIGN A SUMMER HOUSE FOR THE ISLAND.
THAT'S WONDERFUL!
IT WILL DO WONDERS FOR YOUR CAREER. HE WANTS TO SHOW YOU OFF AS THE NEXT UP-AND-COMING ARCHITECT!
NO, BETTY...
...THAT'S NOT IT.
WHAT?
HE WANTS TO SEE IF I'M WORTH ANYTHING.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

YOU DON'T KNOW MY FATHER.
HE CAN'T STAND PEOPLE WHO CAN'T MAKE MONEY.
WHAT'S WRONG?
I'M AFRAID OF HIM.
...
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
...I'LL HELP YOU.
BETTY...
MY FATHER LOVED THE LOOK OF THIS HOUSE. BUT YOU DESIGNED IT, INSTEAD OF ME.
YOU UNDERSTOOD HIS TASTES.
I WAS LUCKY.
NO, YOU REALLY ARE TALENTED.

I RECOMMENDED YOU TO WORK FOR MY FATHER..
...AND YOU BEGAN TO WIN BIG COMPETIONS.
...
UN-BELIEVE-ABLE.
I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO SUCCEED ...
...LIKE THIS.
BUT WE ALWAYS WORKED TOGETHER.
I KNOW.
I JUST WORK FOR YOU, DARLING.
DO YOU REMEMBER THE BASEMENT POOL?
THE INDOOR POOL YOU DESIGNED.
I WANTED US TO HAVE A PLACE TO SWIM.. WE COULD SPEND THE REST OF OUR LIVES GROWING OLD HERE.
YOU KNOW ...
I'M NOT SO YOUNG ANYMORE.

I KNOW THAT.
I'M ALWAYS CONCERNED ABOUT YOU.
BETTY ?
HMM
OH GORDON
SNAP
CHAK
WHAM

I'M FINE WITHOUT YOU NOW, THOUGH.

HM?
WHO COULD THAT BE?
WHO'D COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?!

YES, WHAT IS IT?
THIS IS A PRIVATE ISLAND I DON'T RECALL ASKING ANYONE TO COME HERE.
I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH BETTY STEWART.
BETTY ?
WHAT KIND OF APPOINT-MENT?
I WAS TO DELIVER THIS PAINTING ...
...HERE TODAY.
I SEE.
BETTY WENT FOR A WALK, SO SHE'S OUT.
I CAN WAIT.
...
IT'S AN IMPORTANT PAINTING.

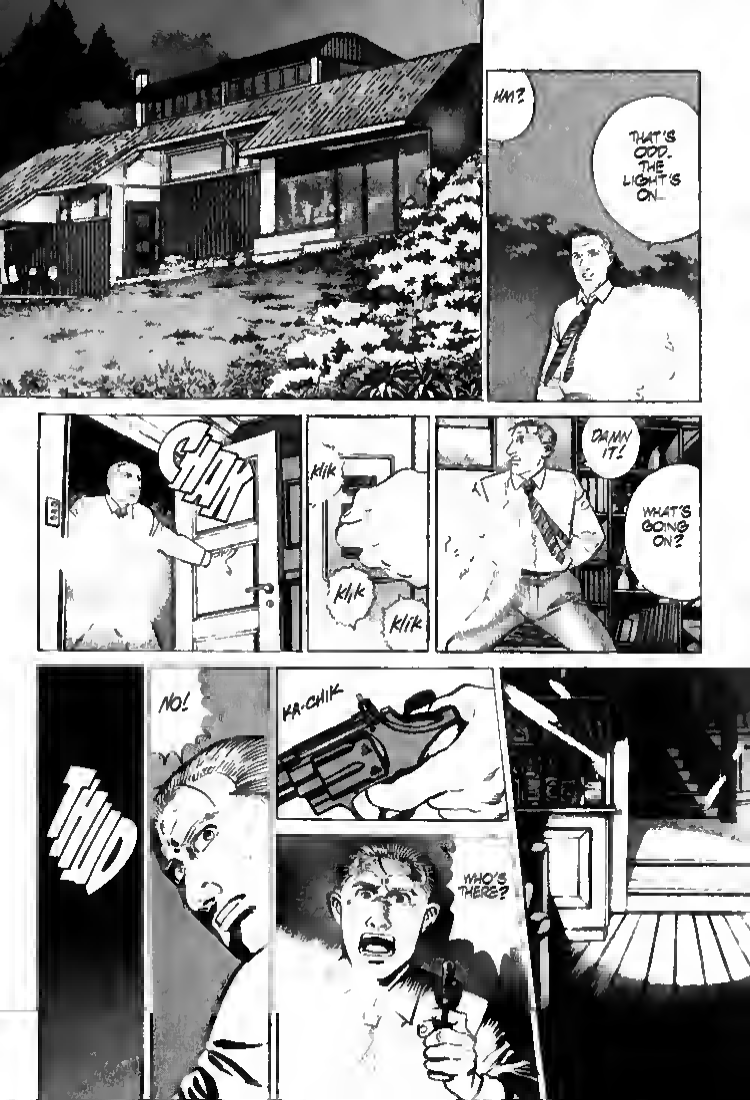
TUNNEL
MY NAME'S GORDON ALEXANDER.
PLEASE.
CALL ME BENKEI.
BENKEI?
IT IS THE NAME OF AN ANCIENT, FEARLESS HERO IN JAPAN.
I SEE.
I'VE HEARD THAT THE JAPANESE ASSUME DEATH COMES FIRST INSTEAD OF LIFE, THAT THEY SEE IT ALL BACKWARDS.

BY CONSIDERING LIFE TO BE MEANINGLESS...
...THEY CAN ASSUAGE THEIR FEAR OF DEATH.
...
BOTH LIFE AND DEATH ARE POWERFULLY PRESENT.
THE DEAD CAN COME BACK...
...AND MAKE US FEAR FOR OUR LIVES.
...
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS ONE.

THE SUN IS SETTING.
I'M GOING TO FIND BETTY.
...
SHE WALKS AROUND THE ENTIRE ISLAND. IT'S A LONG WALK.
I THINK YOU SHOULD GET GOING.
VERY WELL, THEN.
I WILL COME BY TOMORROW.
...
WHAT KIND OF PAINTING DID BETTY ORDER?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK?
...
NO.
I'LL SAVE IT FOR TOMORROW, HA HA HA!

RRRRRR
SHE'LL BE FOUND TOMORROW SHOULD CAUSE QUITE A STIR.
FSSHHH
AHHO
whew.

FSHHHH
YOU FELL INTO A DEPRESSION OVER YOUR DESIGN FOR THE NEXT COMPETITION.
YOU FELT THE LIMITS OF YOUR TALENT.
SO YOU COMMITTED SUICIDE ON THIS ISLAND, WHERE YOU DESIGNED YOUR FIRST BUILDING.
BETTY.
YOU WERE JUST LIKE MY DAD.
YOU WERE TALENTED, TOUGH AND HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT HURTING OTHERS WITH YOUR TALENT.
I COULDN'T HELP IT.


HM?
THAT'S ODD. THE LIGHT'S ON...
SLAM
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
DAMN IT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THUD
NO!
KA-CHIK
WHO'S THERE?

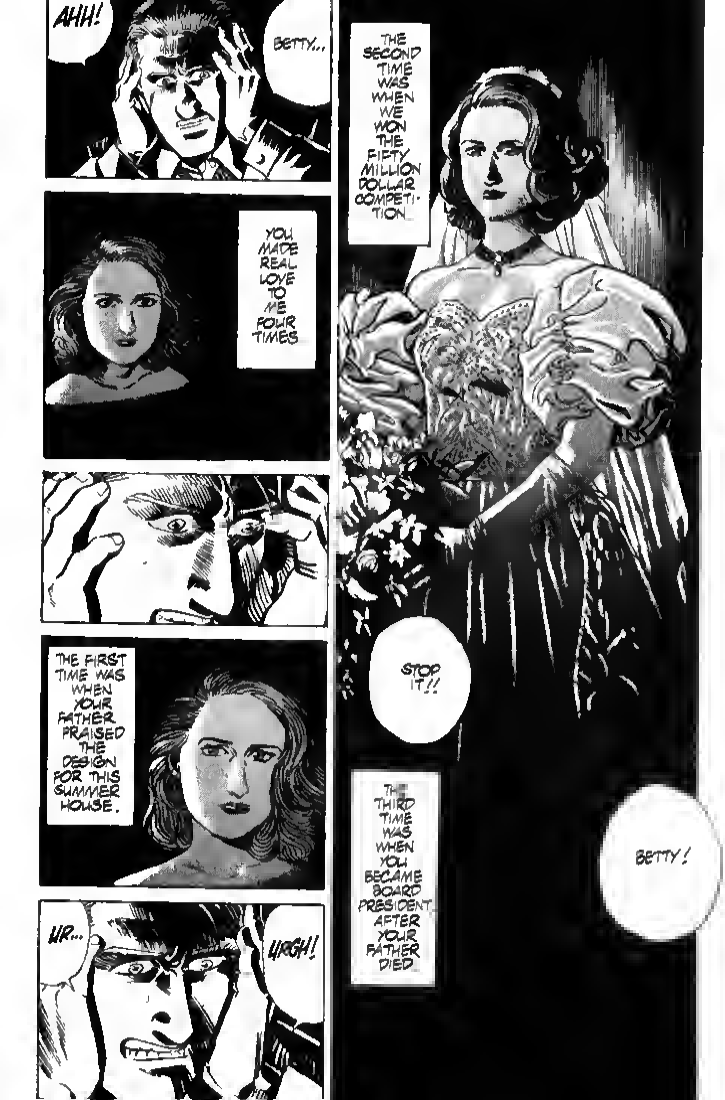
BETTY!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
SLUMP

W-WHAT'S THIS?
TAK TAK TAK
!

ARGH!
BRAK
BRAK
BRAK
UHGH!
I WAS HIRED TO DELIVER THIS PAINTING..
..TO THE APPROPRIATE DESTINATION.
AIEE!
AAGH!
SHOM

CHUD.
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
TAK
TAK
TAK
AIEE!
ARGH!
HFF
AHH
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF

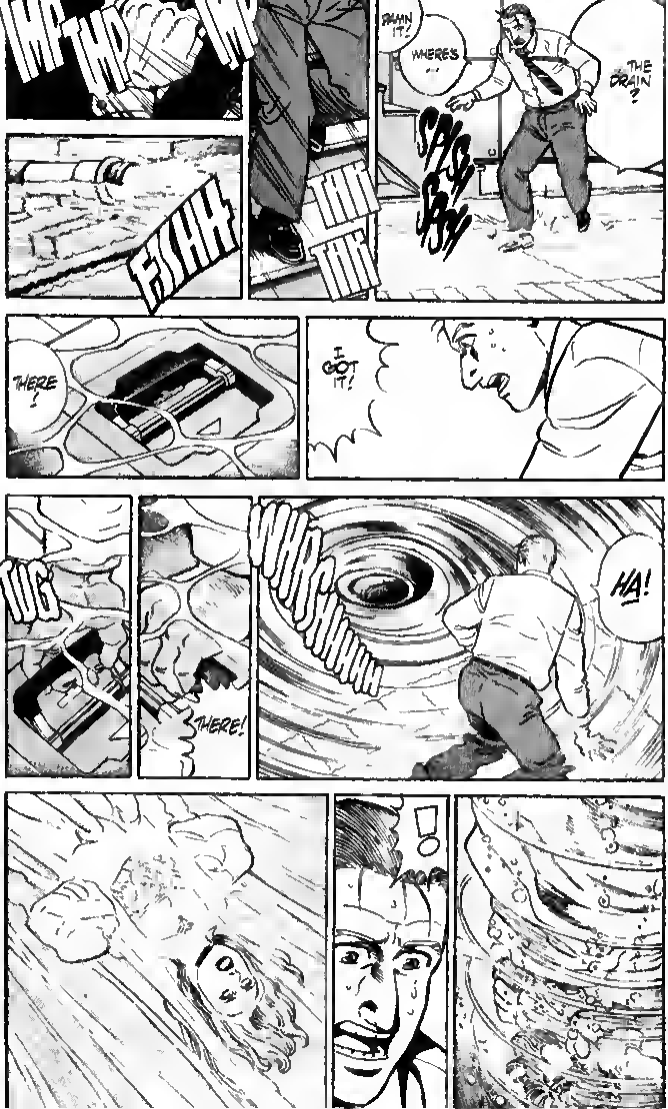
SPLICH
HNNH!
HFF
HFF
THK THK THK
HFF
HFF
HUH
..GORDON.
GORDON...
...
GORDON
UNGH...
BETTY..


AHH!
BETTY...
YOU MADE REAL LOVE TO ME FOUR TIMES
THE FIRST TIME WAS WHEN YOUR FATHER PRAISED THE DESIGN FOR THIS SUMMER HOUSE.
UR...
URGH!
THE SECOND TIME WAS WHEN WE WON THE FIFTY MILLION DOLLAR COMPETITION.
STOP IT!!
THE THIRD TIME WAS WHEN YOU BECAME BOARD PRESIDENT AFTER YOUR FATHER DIED
BETTY!

URGH!
BETTY?
STOP IT...
STOP IT!
STOP IT!
THE FOURTH TIME HAPPENED A MONTH AGO. I COULDN'T FIND A REASON SO I THOUGHT YOU REALLY LOVED ME.
BUT THEN I REALIZED YOU WERE GOING TO GET RID OF
HAPPENED EVERY TIME YOU NEEDED SOMEONE ELSE'S HELP.

THR
WAUD
CHUD
FSHH
Y/GH!
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
AIIEEEE
THR
THR
OPEN
UP!

PLEASE!
I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM BETTY.
THP THP THP
"I LOVED YOU TOO MUCH."
FSHHH
AAAA...
I'LL PAY YOU ANYTHING! I PROMISE!
THP THP
PLEASE ...HELP ME!


THA-THP
THP
DAMN IT!
WHERE'S ..
THE DRAIN?
SPLSHSHSH
THP
THP
FSHH
THERE!
I GOT IT!
TUG
THERE!
WHRRRRRRRR
HA!
!

FHOK
SPLSH
AH!
MNNN..
GULG GULG GULG
AAAA

THE
END

About the Creators

JINPACHI MORI was born in 1958 in Negesahi, Japan. He is a manga writer and essayist, and his photography appears regularly in his monthly column "Tabi suru Kamera" (Journey Camera) in *Be-Pal* magazine, published by Shogakukan, Inc. He recently finished writing the serialized folklore-manga *Tejikaraa*.

JIRO TANIGUCHI was born in 1947 in Tottori, Japan. After high school in 1966, he became an assistant to the professional comics artist Kyota Ishikawa. His previous works include *Unprotected City, Ambra, Trouble Is My Business, The Age of Bocchan, Blanca,* and *Hotel Harbour View,* the latter published in English translation by Viz Communications.